THE

COALITION:

OR,

FAMILY ANECDOTES.

BRITISH MUSEUM
30 NOV 70

THE COALITION: OR, FAMILY ANECDOTES. A NOVEL.

By Mrs. BOYS.

VOL. II.

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION TO

Mrs. HASTINGS.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR MESSRS. PRICE, WHITE, CASH, H. WHITESTONE AND MARCHBANK.

M,DCC,LXXIV.

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Catherine D'Esterre
1796

THE

COALITION.

CHAPTER I.

IN the morning, when Lady Cary arrived in Berkeley-ſquare, ſhe found Miſs Weſtbury in tears; and the inflamed ſtate of her eyes gave her fully to underſtand ſhe had paſſed a ſleepleſs night.

HARRIET threw her arms round the neck of her aunt, "My deareſt, dear "madam," ſaid ſhe, "what will be-"come of me? All that I apprehend-"ed, all that I dreaded, is but too true; "I am to be the wife of this deteſted "Captain; my father has commanded it

" in the moſt peremptory, cruel manner ;
" and I have no alternative. Can
" I comply, when my future miſery,
" muſt be the conſequence ? Can I re-
" fuſe and diſoblige him for ever ?"

LADY CARY's breaſt glowed with indignation at the firſt appearance of Harriet's grief, and her knowledge of the cauſe did not leſſen her reſentment. " Your father is mad," ſaid ſhe ; " as
" he is your father, I am ſorry to men-
" tion him in ſuch terms, but really in-
" ſanity is the only excuſe that can be
" made for him ; but do not deſpair, my
" dear ; keep up your ſpirits, you have
" a friend in me, able and willing to do
" you ſervice." Lady Cary then introduced the park adventure, and enquired who were her companions at the time. Harriet replied, Mrs. Weſtbury and the captain ; and informed her of the converſation which ſhe had there overheard. " I
" aſſure you, madam," ſaid ſhe " this
" has been no ſmall addition to my un-
" eaſineſs ; I cannot like the captain, as
" he

"he now appears; and if the account of "Sir William ſhould be true, what a "wretch muſt he be!" "And his "account was true, I make no doubt," replied her ladyſhip. "Marry him! no, "my dear; aſſure yourſelf Heaven too "juſtly abhors the monſters of iniquity "ever to ſuffer it. But do inform me "how Mr. Weſtbury explained the re-"ſult of his provident conſideration."

HARRIET repeated nearly *verbatim* the whole of her father's converſation, the arguments he made uſe of at firſt, and the very arbitrary ſtyle in which he concluded. "I am well acquainted with "his temper," continued ſhe; "when "he once forms a deſign, neither reaſon "or intreaty, will induce him to relax "in the leaſt; what then have I to ex-"pect? I have no friend in the world "but your ladyſhip!"

"Do not terrify yourſelf with appre-"henſions, which I flatter myſelf will "never be verified," ſaid lady Cary;

" your father's infatuation is really
" aſtoniſhing. Poor man, what pains
" he takes to deceive himſelf! and what
" ridiculous arguments he makes uſe of,
" to vindicate his wrong-headed ſyſtem,
" when a little attention to the rule
" of right would ſave him ſuch an
" infinity of preſent trouble, and future
" anxieties! How a man can ſpeak ſo
" familiarly of duty and obligation,
" while he acts diametrically oppoſite to
" the dictates of both, is truly ſurpriſing!
" But it fully proves the very different
" meaning affixed to the ſame terms,
" when applied to our own purpoſe, and
" when directed to another perſon. Your
" father ſeems to conſider you merely as
" a part of his property, entirely ſub-
" ſervient to his pleaſure, or conveni-
" ence, without allowing any thing for
" the free agency of your own mind. I
" preſume he would think me extremely
" ridiculous, ſhould I tell him his daugh-
" ter is not a rational being, nor endued
" with the faculties of thought, and
" ſpeech; but for what end can he ſup-

" poſe

" poſe thoſe faculties were deſigned? as " his own doctrine evidently precludes, " and renders uſeleſs, every property of " reaſon.

" Do not, my dear child, entertain a " thought of the captain; firſt, try the " effects of your own perſuaſion, and " endeavour, by gentleneſs, to ſubdue " your father's determination; if that " does not ſucceed, depend on my affec- " tion, and be aſſured, I will never ſee " you ſacrificed to a connection, not only " contemptible, but infamous. I will " ſee you again to-morrow, and if he " ſhould perſiſt in his reſolution, after " all you can ſay for yourſelf, I ſhall " certainly take the liberty of explain- " ing my ſentiments, not only of his " preſent proceedings, but of the paſt, " and his *amiable* conſort ſhall meet the " detection of her perfidy, from the hand " ſhe leaſt expects, and in the moment " ſhe thinks herſelf moſt ſecure."

Miss Westbury trembled at the warmth of her aunt's declaration, "Let me "entreat you, my dear madam, said she, "to forego the latter part of your in- "tention. Sir William may possibly be "mistaken, and even admitting that he was "not, what end will be answered by de- "veloping Mrs. Westbury's unworthi- "ness? If she has hitherto had the ad- "dress to preserve his good opinion by "concealing her real character, under "the veil of a fictitious one, 'tis more "than probable she will continue to do "so, and supported by his prejudice, "her artifice may baffle the clearest facts "you could possibly advance to oppose "her; besides, my dear madam, my fa- "ther has married her, the connexion "is indissoluble, and his affection, how- "ever ill placed, renders her necessary "to his happiness; do not, then, inter- "rupt his felicity, by attempting to un- "deceive him, if he thinks himself hap- "py he is so in reality, and sincerely as "I wish to avoid his present purpose, I

" as ſincerely wiſh to avoid giving him
" the leaſt uneaſineſs."

LADY CARY replied, " your conſide-
" ration for your parent is extremely me-
" ritorious, but the man, who to gratify
" his own particular humour in one in-
" ſtance, would heedleſsly ſacrifice the
" future repoſe of an amiable child, has
" but little claim to indulgence on the
" ſcore of being her father; but, Harriet,
" if I paſs lightly over the moſt repre-
" henſible of his actions, I cannot con-
" ſent to deal with equal tenderneſs by
" his better half; ſilence will be highly
" criminal, for if I ſhould permit him to
" foſter this paragon of duplicity, know-
" ing her to be ſo, ſhall I not be conſi-
" dered as the aider and abettor of her
" guilt? No, my dear," continued ſhe,
" be aſſured I will leave no means un-
" purſued for expoſing the impoſtor to
" the whole world, and after that, if Mr.
" Weſtbury chuſes to perſiſt in believ-
" ing his Scotch pebble is really and truly
" a dia-

" a diamond of the firſt water, let him
" wear it accordingly."

Miss Westbury again intreated her aunt not to interfere with her father's domeſtic quiet: " Do not be angry with
" me, my dear madam," ſaid ſhe, " but
" indeed I cannot bear the thoughts of
" waking him from ideal happineſs to
" real miſery; his treatment of me is
" only erroneous, he acts from prin-
" ciple no doubt, and perſuades him-
" ſelf he is ſtudying my happineſs,
" though unfortunately for me, he miſ-
" takes the means, he does not ſee Capt.
" Claverly in the light that I do, nor is
" he ſenſible of my prejudice; he re-
" gards him as the brother of his wife,
" and as ſuch he cannot allow any
" ſtrength to my objections againſt him,
" without tacitly acknowledging the im-
" prudence of his own choice; I am
" well acquainted with my father's diſ-
" poſition, and know the ineffiacy of
" every ſpecies of oppoſition; your la-
" dyſhip's arguments will be juſt as
" inſuffi-

" inſufficient to reaſon him from his pre-
" ſent opinion as to himſelf, as my en-
" treaty will be to win him from his pre-
" ſent purpoſe, with reſpect to me;
" leave him, then, my deareſt madam,
" I conjure you, leave him to the quiet
" enjoyment of his bliſful dreams, and
" only preſerve your affectionate conſi-
" deration for me; I muſt give a nega-
" tive to the commands of my father,
" his arms will be ſhut againſt me; Oh,
" madam! what a dreadful proſpect!
" but will you then receive me into
" your's? and by your friendly pro-
" tection, ſupport me in the eye of the
" world? But for you, my deareſt aunt,
" what would now become of me?
" when compelled to fly from my fa-
" ther's ſeverity, who would receive
" me, who would countenance a run-
" away girl, in the open violation of her
" duty!"

LADY CARY was greatly affected by the artleſs eloquence of the fair pleader, " Nobody, my dear Harriet," ſaid ſhe, " when

"when acquainted with your character "and your motives could think of "blaming you for ſubmitting to the in- "fluence of ſuch circumſtances; there "are reciprocal obligations exiſting be- "twixt parents and children, a due con- "ſideration to which never ought to be "laid aſide; a father is highly juſtifia- "ble for wiſhing to direct the inclina- "tion of his child to an equal and pru- "dent union, but I hardly think him "authorized to compel her acceptance "even of that, and on the other hand, "though a child may be exempted "from ſubmitting to arbitrary ſway, "ſhe can have no right to diſpoſe of "herſelf without the paternal ſanction: "a mutual attention to theſe reſpective "duties, would tend infinitely to the "happineſs of family parties, but the one "overſtraining authority, and the other "abuſing indulgence, cauſes all the do- "meſtic diſſentions which are the ſub- "ject of ſuch general complaint."

"We

"WE will ſay no more, my dear "Harriet, at preſent, place an entire "confidence in my affection, and do "not ſuffer yourſelf to be intimidated "by your fears, ſtate your objections "freely, candidly, and impartially to "your father, and offer every conceſſion "duty and religion can demand."

HARRIET vented the feelings of her heart in the warmeſt expreſſions of gratitude, and Lady Cary left her with a promiſe of calling early next day.

CHAP. II.

MISS WESTBURY was indulging her imagination with a review of her aunt's tender ſolicitude, when ſhe received a meſſage, which, notwithſtanding her reſolution to the contrary, threw her into extreme agitation.

TREMBLING ſhe obeyed her father's ſummons, and attended him in the drawing-

ing room; he received her with a ſmile of complaiſance on his countenance, and the idea, that in a few moments this ſmile would be ſucceeded by every expreſſion of indignation, increaſed her before almoſt inſupportable confuſion.

"THIS caſket, Harriet," ſaid Mr. Weſtbury, "contains the jewels of your "mother, they are now your's; this bill, "my dear, you will likewiſe apply to your "own uſe, and if your fancy needs any "aſſiſtance or direction, you will receive "it from Mrs. Weſtbury. I have given "orders that your union with my friend "ſhall take place on Saturday."

MISS Weſtbury had dreaded nothing ſo much as her father's anger, and had collected all her courage to ſupport his rage, but ſhe found herſelf every way unequal to her preſent ſituation, generoſity was a mode of attack ſhe leaſt expected, and of courſe was leaſt prepared for; ſhe ſunk on her knees before him, and begged him to recall the dreadful ſentence: "Let

"Let me entreat you, my dear Sir," ſaid ſhe, "not to inſiſt on my compli-
"ance! do not make me for ever miſe-
"rable!—I cannot marry Captain Cla-
"verly—I hope I have never hitherto
"been wanting in obedience, and my
"heart bleeds now, at the neceſſity of
"paining you by my refuſal,—but I
"cannot marry the captain! indeed I
"cannot!"

"I THOUGHT," replied Mr. Weſtbury coolly, "I had fully explained myſelf
"on that head yeſterday, nor did I ex-
"pect to receive any contradiction."
"Ah! Sir," ſaid Harriet, "any other
"command I will obey without reluc-
"tance. In this inſtance, I hope, I en-
"treat you will forgive me, were it leſs
"than my happineſs for life, I would
"ſacrifice it with pleaſure, but my ob-
"jections to the captain are inſur-
"mountable."

MR. Weſtbury began to be ſoftened by his daughter's tears, but the mention

of

of her objections brought the dreſſing-room converſation between the captain and his ſiſter, freſh into his mind, and he could by no means permit what he termed their generous artifice to triumph over his reſolution. He therefore fortified himſelf againſt her perſuaſion, with a double portion of obſtinacy, by him ycleped firmneſs, and replied with a ſmile, "I know all your objections, "Harriet, or rather the objections of "Mrs. Weſtbury, but be aſſured they "will have no force with me, becauſe "they are without foundation; one word, "child, is ſufficient, I expect obedience, "prepare to let me find it."—"Hear "me, Sir," ſaid Miſs Weſtbury, "let "me at leaſt entreat you will hear what "I have to ſay:—Affection is involun-"tary, and not to be commanded; in-"deed I have endeavoured to look on "Captain Claverly in the manner you "wiſh, but I find it impoſſible!—My "ſtubborn heart will not admit the doc-"trine I have attempted to inculcate; "and how can I in the face of heaven,

"vow

" vow to honour and obey a man when " at the very moment I am ſenſible I " can never do it."

" Hear me, child," ſaid Mr. Weſtbury, " this is a point to be given up by " one of us, you are acquainted with " my ſentiments, and on Saturday I ex- " pect to be made acquainted with your's, " at preſent, Miſs Weſtbury, you are at " liberty to retire."—She waited not for a ſecond permiſſion, but immediately retired to her chamber, where ſhe found her faithful attendant waiting her arrival.

CHAP. III.

HARRIET could no longer reſtrain the tears; Betty affectionately enquired the cauſe of her miſtreſs's grief, and was fully informed of every particular, the poor girl ſtood for a moment with her mouth half opened, but ſuddenly recovering her ſpirits,

ſpirits, "Well, now hang me," ſaid ſhe, "if my elbow did not itch all laſt night, "and if my apron did not come untied "of itſelf, as I came up ſtairs, and every "body ſays that's a ſign of a wedding, "but as the ſaying is, there is nothing "certain but death, and there's many "misfortunes between the cup and the "lip, and ſo who knows, after all, per-"haps they may find themſelves miſta-"ken. You know, Ma'am, one ought "not to be caſt down; while there's life "there's hopes; after a ſtorm comes a "calm, and good fortune treads on "the heels of bad. And ſo, Ma'am, "when you are at leiſure, there's ſome-"thing for your inſpection," gently placing a letter on the table before her.

HARRIET, by a ſingle glance, diſcovered the well known character of Lewiſham. "Fooliſh!" ſaid ſhe, eagerly ſeizing it, "how could you ſtand ſo long "retailing your nonſenſical proverbs?" "Ah! my valuable friend," continued ſhe, ſighing and breaking the ſeal, "this "will

"will ſet my heart at reſt, by informing "me why you have been ſo long ſilent." But her ſurprize could only be equalled by her diſappointment, when ſhe found it contained the following words:

"DEAR MISS WESTBURY,

"THE gratitude I feel for your par- "tiality in my favour will not permit "me to be long ſilent. I doubt not "but you have already given me "your hard thoughts, for not anſwer- "ing your kind letter before, but the "truth is I had nothing to ſay. You "muſt be ſenſible, Miſs Harriet, from "the inequality of our ſituation and "circumſtances, it is very unlikely Mr. "Weſtbury ſhould ever be induced to "look favourably on our attachment, "and to wait any length of time for the "removal of obſtacles is very inconve- "nient to my affairs. Theſe conſidera- "tions will, I dare ſay, have due weight "with you, if any thing ſhould offer "worthy your acceptance.

"An

" An elderly lady, of great fortune, in " this part of the world, had given me " frequent hints, that my devoirs would " be highly acceptable to her; but find- " ing I did not, nor would not under- " ſtand her, ſhe this day ſpoke too plainly " to leave me in any doubt of her mean- " ing. You cannot ſuppoſe, Miſs, but " that I ſhould give the preference to " you, if you was your own miſtreſs; but " as that is not the caſe, I think I ſhould " be highly to blame ſhould I refuſe the " preſent favour.

" With the trueſt reſpect for paſt fa- " vours I ſhall ever remain, my dear " Miſs Weſtbury, your obliged and de- " voted ſervant, L."

Harriet had hardly run her eye over this curious epiſtle, when her fingers became entirely unnerved, and it dropped on the floor; while the aſtoniſhed fair one ſtood, the expreſs reſemblance of a beautiful ſtatue: looking earneſtly at the attendant,

tendant, "Betty," ſaid ſhe, "do read "the contents of that paper, and tell "me if I am ſleeping or waking!" Betty's curioſity was in high order for the commiſſion; ſhe peruſed the letter, and ſhared her miſtreſs's ſurpriſe; but the ſame circumſtances affect different diſpoſitions in a different manner. Harriet was deprived of ſpeech by the confuſion of her ideas, but Betty never wanted words to expreſs her feelings, however extenſive or varied they might be. She could run from one thing to another, juſt as it roſe in her mind, with all the eaſe in the world, and never loſt the brilliancy of a new idea, by ſtudying the language in which it ſhould appear. Betty pretended to be well informed in the learned arcana of the wiſe men of the Eaſt, and could caſt a nativity in the ſediment of a tea-cup more infallible than the magicial taliſman of the moſt ſtudious oration Sage. Mr. Lewiſham ſtood foremoſt in this damſel's favour, and to amuſe her miſtreſs ſhe had frequently conſulted her oracle,

oracle, as to his future fortune; the myſterious reſponſes were always favourable; ſhe had foretold wonders of the greatneſs he was to arrive at, and the long ſeries of happineſs her miſtreſs was to enjoy with him, for that was always the end of her conſultations. —Judge what muſt have been the confuſion of the propheteſs on the reading of a letter which ſo directly and flatly contradicted all her prognoſtics. She held his deſertion of Miſs Harriet ſufficiently inexcuſable in itſelf, but his acting inconſiſtent with the ſpirit of her divination was a crime of monſtrous magnitude, and ſhe ſilently vowed never to forgive it. "Oh! "the perfidious," ſaid ſhe, "to leave "ſuch a ſweet young lady to marry an "old harridan! I hope, ma'am, ſhe "will live to the age of Methuſelah, and "plague his heart out with gout and "rheumatiſm! A wretch! if I could "but ſee him, I would give it him as "well! Oh! if I had but known what "a pack of ſtuff the fellow had brought, "I would have ſent him away with a flea

in

" in his ear, and his letter along with " him!"

HARRIET again took the letter, and once more examined its contents, ſighing as though her heart would break. " My God," ſaid ſhe, " what an altered " being muſt he be! this paper," continued ſhe, folding it with one received on a former occaſion, " will I preſerve " as mementos of the ſame perſon; what " he once was, and what he now is!"

" I WISH," ſaid Betty, " he had been " drowned in the canal."

" I AM almoſt tempted to join in the " wiſh," ſaid Harriet, " for, by ſharing " the ſame fate, how much uneaſineſs " and trouble ſhould I have eſcaped!" " Do, ma'am," ſaid Betty, " do now " marry the Captain directly out of " ſpite."

" No," replied Harriet, " if the man " who appeared ſo very perfect, can ſink

" ſo low, what may not be expected
" from one ſo infinitely inferior?"

" GRATITUDE for my partiality!" continued ſhe, adverting to the letter, " I
" was indeed partial to his virtues, and
" my friendſhip deſerved not ſo poor an
" inſult. My kind letter! but for that
" indelicate reproach, Lewiſham, I ſhould
" now doubt the evidence of my ſenſes,
" and ſhould perſuade myſelf your heart
" could never dictate, or your hand pen,
" ſo vile a ſcroll as this! Surely it is
" impoſſible that, retaining his ſenſes,
" he could ever dare to addreſs me in
" ſuch a ſtyle!"

SHE aſked Betty how this letter had been received, and was informed, a porter had enquired for Miſs Weſtbury's maid, who ſaid, it was given him by a gentleman at a coffee-houſe, with the ſtricteſt injunction to deliver it into her miſtreſs's hand. Betty added much ſpontaneous matter on the perfidy of men, and recounted a number of puniſh-

ments

ments which falſe-hearted lovers would, ſooner or later, meet with.

HARRIET paid little attention to the evils which, according to Betty, were hanging *in terrorem* over the head of Lewiſham, as all her ideas were engroſſed by his extraordinary *billet doux*; ſhe wiſhed to perſuade herſelf there muſt be ſome miſtake, but could not find a ſingle loop-hole for admitting the belief. The hand writing was certainly his, and not only that, the kind letter alluded to was known only to themſelves, therefore the hint could ariſe from no other perſon. She ſought every way to find ſomething in his favour, but in vain; while her heart wiſhed to prove him innocent, her reaſon pronounced him guilty.

WHEN Miſs Weſtbury left her father in the drawing-room, ſhe had concluded herſelf completely miſerable; ſhe was now convinced of the contrary. The diſpleaſure of her father, her apprehenſions of the captain, even the approach-

ing wedding-day, all were forgotten in the more prevailing influence of this new misfortune. She had thought herſelf unable to ſupport the half of what ſhe now ſuffered, but her accumulated diſtreſs, by dividing her ideas, might be ſaid to form a balance for itſelf, and one part ſuſpended the other.

She conſidered Lady Cary as the only perſon who extended a friendly hand in her favour, and invited her to an hoſpitable aſylum; but the dreadful idea of eloping, though to the arms of her aunt, damped every pleaſing ſenſation which aroſe from the certainty of having ſuch a friendly aſylum in view,—her mind was a perfect chaos; nor were all her efforts ſufficient to recall her ſcattered ſenſes to any particular point.

One moment ſhe thought of intreating the friendſhip of Mrs. Weſtbury, but ſhe inſtantly ſaw the folly of her intention, as ſhe had little doubt of that lady's being a principal cauſe of her preſent unhapineſs.

If ſhe thought of directing her rhetoric to the captain, the ſame objection occurred; was it likely any ſenſe of honour, or generoſity, could operate in a breaſt like his, againſt the ſelfiſh dictates of intereſt?

To think of ſoftening her father would be only deceiving herſelf; if ſhe attempted it ſhe was ſure of not ſucceeding; he had expreſsly forbidden her to addreſs him on the ſubject. Not having any thing to hope from either of theſe ſuggeſtions, ſhe laid them all aſide, and attended the dinner ſummons, without coming to any determination.

CHAP. IV.

IN the evening Mr. and Mrs. Weſtbury were engaged in a party from home and the gallant captain left to prefer his ſuit to Miſs Harriet

THE captain was but little ſubject to modeſt embarraſſment but he did not ſhine, on the preſent occaſion, with his uſual brilliancy.

HAD Miſs Weſtbury's mind been more at eaſe, his awkward littleneſs had been highly entertaining, but ſhe expected every moment he would enter on the ſubjects, of all others the moſt diſagreeable, and was debating with herſelf, in what manner ſhe ſhould receive the tender of his affection; whether to expreſs a grateful ſenſe of the honour he did her, but beg leave civilly to decline it, with ſome of her reaſons for ſo doing; or, with a frown, cut ſhort his untold tale, and at once convince him (of what he well knew already) that he had nothing to hope from her! Or ſhould ſhe treat his addreſs in a ludicrous light, and by that means produce a little amuſement out of much uneaſineſs.

HER cogitations were interrupted by the captain's approach—he attempted to take her hand, but ſhe begged to be excuſed,

cuſed, with a ſmile, we ſuppoſe, of contempt.

"YOUR enchanting ſmile, Miſs Weſt-
"bury," ſaid the captain, "reſtores
"me to a confidence, of which my ſenſe
"of your exalted merit has ſome time
"deprived me;—Mr. Weſtbury has
"done me the honour"—"My father,"
ſaid Harriet, interrupting him, "has
"fully informed me of the honour he
"has done you, and by that means has
"left you nothing to ſay on the ſubject,
"and I have as fully explained my ſen-
"timents on the occaſion, which I have
"no inclination to repeat at preſent."

"DARE I flatter myſelf," ſaid the captain, "that thoſe ſentiments were
"not entirely deſtructive of my hopes?
"Be aſſured, too charming Miſs Weſt-
"bury, there lives not a man whoſe heart
"is ſo warmly prepared to adore you as
"mine."

"As I take it, captain," replied Harriet, "in the preſent caſe, hands, not

" hearts, is the queſtion, the union of " hands alone, is the object of conſe- " quence, becauſe neceſſary to the con- " veyance of titles and eſtates, but as to " hearts, the lover ſeldom takes the trou- " ble of enquiring whether his miſtreſs " poſſeſſes one or not."

" But I ſhould hope," replied the captain, " Miſs Weſtbury does not ſuppoſe " me maſter of ſo little delicacy as to " be indifferent in that very material ar- " ticle, when herſelf is the object in " queſtion, an object, the acquiſition of " which might gratify the ambition, " and do honour to the affection of a " prince."

" In your opinion, captain," replied Miſs Weſtbury, " which is moſt culpa- " ble, the man who takes his miſtreſs " without enquiring whether ſhe has a " heart or not, or the man who takes her " believing ſhe really poſſeſſes one, but " not inclined in his favour, nay poſſibly " in the favour of another perſon ?"

I SHOULD

"I SHOULD be the moſt miſerable of "men," ſaid the captain, "to be in the "predicament of either;—the firſt can "only ariſe from natural brutality, and "an indifference to the perfections of "the mind, the laſt I think can ſeldom "happen, and in inſtances of the "kind, the man who is ſo unfortu-"nate muſt certainly be governed by "unaccountable circumſtances, nor can "he give a ſtronger proof of his confi-"dence in the virtue and principles of "his miſtreſs; but may I beg the honour "of knowing what could give riſe to "Miſs Weſtbury's preſent ideas?"

"I ENQUIRED for information," replied Harriet, "but if you pleaſe, cap-"tain we will talk of ſomething en-"tirely unconnected with ourſelves, my "father is content to take all the trou-"ble on himſelf relating to me, and it "would be ridiculous in you, and me, "as principals, to enter on a diſcuſſion "of the preliminary articles, after the "terms of the treaty are finally ſettled

" by a higher power; all that we could " ſay would amount to nothing, as our " opinions, I make no doubt, are already " eſtabliſhed."

THE captain replied, his opinion ever had been ſenſibly impreſſed by her lovely idea, but as the miſtreſs of his fate, her commands muſt be obeyed, however reluctantly he might give up the ſubject of his heart, while his adoration was accepted, he would be happy, and in all things elſe ſubmit with pleaſure to her determination.

HARRIET choſe not to reply, fearing a continuation of the ſubject, and ſoon after, on the return of Mr. and Mrs. Weſtbury, ſhe retired.

MISS WESTBURY had conducted herſelf with tolerable ſpirits all the evening, but her courage forſook her when ſhe involuntarily entered on a review of her circumſtances, and her tears again were her only relief.

THE

THE next morning Lady Cary called on her again, and Harriet repeated all that had paſſed.

HER Ladyſhip encouraged her in the moſt affectionate terms: "Your father's "preſent behaviour," my dear Harriet, ſaid ſhe, "is what I expected from the "paſt, and I fear we have nothing to "hope from him; but we muſt act "with propriety in regard to our "own ſatisfaction, and leave nothing un-"done to reproach us in future; but be "aſſured you ſhall not be ſacrificed to "tyranny and ambition.—Mr. Weſtbury "forgets, and diſcards nature and rea-"ſon, and in conſequence, from a prin-"ciple of ſelf-preſervation, you muſt "be juſtified in ſeeking an hoſpitable "and honourable aſylum, without in-"curring the imputation of the runa-"way, and diſobedient, which you ſo "much dread. Your ſenſe of deco-"rum only yields to neceſſity, nor "ſhall you clandeſtinely leave your fa-"ther's houſe, till the moment your

"ſtay

" ſtay becomes dangerous." Lady Cary having then informed her in what manner ſhe wiſhed her to act, if Mr. Weſtbury perſiſted in his reſolution, ſhe took leave of her, with a repition of her friendly promiſes.

CHAP. V.

WE have before informed our readers of many circumſtances in the conduct of Mrs. Weſtbury, which both Harriet and Lady Cary are ſtill unacquainted with, and from thence 'tis likely their penetration may direct them to the true ſource of the letter, which gave Harriet ſo much uneaſineſs.

No young woman was bleſt with more provident friends than Miſs Weſtbury; in the preſent inſtance Lady Cary and

and Mrs. Weſtbury were exactly of the ſame opinion; they both wiſhed to give Harriet a lover of their own choice, and both ſaw the neceſſity of firſt eraſing from her heart, the impreſſion which had been made by her own.

Lady Cary was content to truſt to gentle admonitions and the voice of reaſon; but Mrs. Weſtbury had infinitely more faith in the efficacy of fraud and artifice, becauſe ſhe was much better ſkilled in their practice.

When ſhe was firſt acquainted with Harriet, ſhe had no ſuſpicion that any ſuch impreſſion exiſted, and when ſhe made the diſcovery in the manner before deſcribed, ſhe thought proper to keep her knowledge of the matter entirely to herſelf; we cannot aſcertain her reaſon for ſo doing, not apprehending ſhe had any fears, that the idea of diſhonourably ſupplanting a favoured rival, would affect the delicacy of the captain enough to deter him from the attempt, when

whe he was ſtimulated by the lure of intereſt, dazzling his eyes in perſpective.

MRS. WESTBURY was unable to give Lewiſham a kind anſwer to his letter, from her ignorance of his ſituation, but from the contents of thoſe letters, ſhe learned he was undiſtinguiſhed by any large portion of fortune's ſmiles, and that his circumſtances were confined and dependent; her inventive genius immediately whiſpered ſomething of conſequence might be produced from this part of her knowledge; Harriet, with the advantage of fortune, &c. on her ſide, would, ſhe conceived, be extremely hurt by the leaſt ſhadow of his neglect or inſult; the intercepting, and detention of his letters would give him every appearance of the firſt, and when a proper opportunity offered, her acquaintance with his hand-writing, which ſhe had by this means acquired, enabled her to produce a very tolerable proof of the laſt; that opportunity was now arrived, ſhe compoſed

poſed the counterfeit letter, and got it delivered at what ſhe ſuppoſed a critical period, conceiving if Harriet's diſpoſition was ſoured by her father's declaration, her feeling would be more tenderly awake to a ſenſe of indignity, and a moment's picque at the faithleſſneſs of her lover, might do more in the captain's favour, then all the arguments Mr. Weſtbury could make uſe of.

EVERY part of her ſcheme had hitherto ſucceeded beyond her expectations, and ſhe had many motives for wiſhing it happily terminated. Harriet and the captain were both prodigiouſly in her way, the firſt ſhe conſidered as a domeſtic ſpy, and the other teized her by his freedom and impertinence.

THE captain's finances were dwindled to nothing, and though the liberality of Mr. Weſtbury enabled his wife to furniſh him with pretty large ſupplies, ſtill he was not content, he was impatient to realize his hopes by the attainment of a ſum

ſum ſufficient to give him an independent right to parade and conſequence; the captain had no notion of ſhining in a ſmall way, he looked on his own qualifications as great, and manifold, and intended entering the hemiſphere of the *beau monde*, with all the luſtre befitting a ſtar of the firſt magnitude.

Mrs. Westbury, likewiſe thought it prudent at preſent, to pay a particular attention to her huſband; ſhe ſcarce left him for a moment, but was perpetually at his elbow, by which means ſhe not only kept every foreign intruder at a diſtance, but by keeping him continually engaged, ſhe baniſhed his own reflections, which were the companions ſhe moſt dreaded.

But it was neceſſity, and not inclination which governed her conduct; the ſocial and domeſtic pleaſures were beyond the ſtandard of her intellects, home was not her element, dreſs, cards and gallantry, were her deities, and her heart panted

panted to enter the vortex of diſſipation, unreſtrained by the preſence of a huſband, old enough to be her father.

For this reaſon ſhe forwarded the affair of the captain with all her addreſs, on the denoument of which, depended her own freedom; ſhe doubted not of ſucceſs, conceiving it now impoſſible for Harriet to eſcape the toils which were ſet for her on every ſide. Mr. Weſtbury would hear neither intreaty, nor objections, as he perſuaded himſelf from the dreſſing-room converſation, all ſhe ſhould ſay was by her inſtigation agreeable to the plan he had overheard; Miſs Weſtbury had no friend whoſe influence could come in competition with her's; what then had ſhe to apprehend from the oppoſition of an unprotected girl, entirely given up to her machinations? She had nothing to fear but the unknown lover, and ſhe flattered herſelf that the letter would effectually deſtroy all her confidence in him.

HARRIET paſſed every hour of her probational week with the utmoſt anxiety; the captain frequently attempted to ſpeak of love but was as often ſilenced by her expreſſing her diſlike to unneceſſary ſpeeches; however, ſhe ſaw the preparations for their nuptials carried on as though her conſent had been a matter of courſe.

THE laſt intermediate day was now arrived, ſhe employed the whole morning in writing to Mr. Weſtbury, ſhe ſaid every thing it was poſſible to ſay to apologize for her preſent refuſal, and to aſſure him of her future obedience; that ſhe hoped her entreaty would prevail on him, if not to give up, at leaſt to poſtpone the execution of a ſentence worſe to her than death; and if in a ſhort time he found no cauſe to change his opinion as to the merits of his preſent choice, ſhe aſſured him ſhe would not heſitate to obey the utmoſt of his wiſh. She made uſe of prayers, and reaſon to obtain a favourable hearing, and conjured him, by the

the remembrance of her dying mother's requeſt, when ſhe recommended her to his tenderneſs, not to make her miſerable by doing violence to her inclination.

Mr. Westbury returned her lettter unopened, coolly obſerving he had nothing to ſay to her at preſent, the next morning would convince him whether he had, or had not a daughter.

His cruel treatment ſhocked her extremely, and confirmed the neceſſity her ſoul dreaded; as the appointed hour approached, her apprehenſions increaſed, till ſhe was nearly incapable of purſuing the projected plan; ſhe pleaded indiſpoſition as an excuſe for not attending the ſummons to tea; and at eight o'clock hearing the carriage ſhe expected, ſhe commanded her ſervant to attend her, and ſilently deſcended trembling to the ſquare, where the good Lady Cary waited to receive the frightened dove into the friendly covert of her affectionate boſom.

They

THEY were ſoon ſet down in Harley-ſtreet, where the behaviour of her lady-ſhip, tender and benevolent, was a reviving cordial to the drooping ſpirits of the dejected Harriet; to experience the efficacy of which, we muſt leave her, while we relate what paſſed in Berkley-ſquare after her departure.

CHAP. VI.

MISS WESTBURY's plea of indiſpoſition, by which ſhe had eluded the tea-table ſummons, very much diſtreſſed the *good-natured, affectionate* Mrs. Weſtbury, who ſoon after warmly inſiſted on perſonally enquiring what had affected the dear girl's health, proteſting it was impoſſible for her to be eaſy while Miſs Weſtbury was otherwiſe.

AGREE-

AGREEABLE to the dictates of her tenderneſs and humanity, ſhe aſcended the ſtairs, and gently entered Harriet's apartment; but her ſurprize on finding it entirely evacuated by its inhabitants betrayed itſelf in an unvoluntary ſcream, which inſtantly alarmed the gentlemen below; on enquiring the cauſe, her information plunged them into equal aſtoniſhment!—Where could ſhe be? was the enquiry from every mouth at the ſame time, but no one could reply; they entered her room in a party; when Mr. Weſtbury perceived a letter on her toilet directed to himſelf, which he ſuppoſed was deſigned to unravel the myſtery.

THIS letter had eſcaped the prying eyes of Mrs. Weſtbury, in her flutter, or ſhe certainly would not have truſted it to her huſband, till ſhe had ſatisfied herſelf whether the contents were proper for his inſpection; Mr Weſtbury, read as follows:

" My dear Father,

" Incapable of moving your reſolu-
" tion by prayer, and entreaty, I am con-
" ſtrained to take a ſtep, which cannot
" be more ſeverely condemned by you
" than diſapproved by me; I ſtand now
" on the verge of leaving the houſe of my
" father, God knows if ever to return.

" A Lady of character and faſhion,
" compaſſionating my unhappy circum-
" ſtances, offers me an aſylum, and to
" her protection I am about to fly, from
" the inexorable determination of my
" natural parent; I write now on my
" knees, to aſſure you, if I may be happy
" enough to obtain your forgiveneſs in
" this particular, which ſo intimately con-
" cerns my future happineſs, my whole
" life ſhall be devoted to your guidance
" and direction in every other inſtance.

Reflect, my deareſt, dear father on
" every action of my paſt life; have I ever
" before diſobeyed you? Let me then ap-
" peal

"peal to your tenderneſs, nor appeal in
"vain; let not one involuntary crime
"induce you to drive from your heart,
"the remembrance of your unhappy
"daughter, H. W."

When Mr. Weſtbury had finiſhed reading, the captain and Mrs. Weſtbury interchanged a look, fully expreſſing to each other the nature of their preſent feelings; the creſt-fallen ſchemers beheld their airy caſtles ſunk to nothing, they feared never to be raiſed again; Mr. Weſtbury's rage for a moment deprived him of utterance, but he recovered his ſpeech to exclaim againſt the audacious girl, declaring ſhe was no longer a daughter of his, nor as ſuch would he ever again conſider her.

Mrs. Westbury's attentive ear caught the pleaſing ſound, and her demon of invention inſtantly flattered her with new hopes; ſhe wiſhed to confirm him in his pious reſolution, as the moſt effectual mode

mode for which, ſhe immediately became Miſs Weſtbury's advocate, and pleaded abruptly for her re-admiſſion to his favour, till the conſequence was exactly what ſhe expected, he became more and more incenſed, and at laſt peremptorily forbad her ever again to mention her name.

THE place of her flight, they concluded, was Lady Cary's, the friendly regard ſhe had ever expreſſed for Miſs Weſtbury, fully authorized the ſuppoſition, that the lady alluded to could be no other; the next morning Mr. Weſtbury wrote to her lad; ſhip in the following terms:

" MADAM

" THE reſpect which I feel for your la-
" dyſhip's character, and the veneration
" paid you by the whole world, renders it
" almoſt impoſſible for me to believe you
" would knowingly uphold a wilful and
" diſobedient daughter, in a clandeſtine
elope-

" elopement from the prudent autho-
" rity of her father.

" YOUR ladyſhip will pardon me if I
" err, but I have ſome reaſon to believe
" Miſs Weſtbury is at preſent what ſhe
" calls under your protection; if that is
" really the caſe, I am ſenſible you muſt
" have been greatly impoſed upon, but
" at any rate I cannot conceive why in-
" different perſons ſhould think of in-
" terfering in the domeſtic regulations
" of a family, with which they are en-
" tirly unconnected.

" As my daughter, ſhe was at my diſ-
" poſal, but as ſhe diſclaims my autho-
" rity, I diſclaim the title, and ſhall for
" the future endeavour to forget her in-
" diſcretion by loſing all remembrance
" of her; I am ſorry I cannot thank
" your ladyſhip for the part you have
" thought proper to take in my affairs,
" as I am entirely unacquainted with the
" motive which induced you to honour
" me with your interpoſition; I am like-

" wiſe ignorant what ſatisfaction you " will experience in having taken " from my hands the trouble of re- " gulating the conduct of an obſtinate, " perverſe girl. What your ladyſhip's " intention as to that girl may be, I am " now abſolutely indifferent, as I aſſure " you ſhe has nothing to expect from " your ladyſhip's humble ſervant,

C. WESTBURY."

LADY CARY ſaid nothing to Harriet, but immediately returned the following anſwer.

" SIR,

" THE beginning of your letter is " ſo much in my favour, it is en- " tirely unneceſſary for me to ſay any " thing of myſelf; I will therefore pro- " ceed to anſwer, minutely as poſſible, " every part of its contents.

FIRST, then, I acknowledge Miſs " Weſtbury really is under my protec- " tion; that, according to you, I know- " ingly uphold her againſt your autho-

" rity.

" rity. I do ſo, becauſe I conceived you
" ſtrained that authority to a moſt un-
" juſtifiable pitch. I have no reaſon to
" ſuppoſe your daughter is by any means
" what you deſcribe her. Her wilful
" diſobedience appears to me an honeſt
" averſion to deceit. She dared not, in
" the face of heaven, alineate her hand
" and heart, nor pledge her faith at the
" altar, in obedience to the dictates of
" tyranny, while ſhe felt nothing but
" deteſtation for the object.

" HER quitting your houſe was nature's
" firſt law, ſelf-preſervation, and the only
" method by which ſhe could eſcape an
" alliance every way unworthy of her.
" My reaſon for interfering is eaſily ex-
" plained; your firſt wife, Mrs. Weſt-
" bury, the amiable mother of your
" Harriet, had a ſiſter named Amelia,
" and the lady who now has the honour
" of addreſſing you, under whoſe pro-
" tection your daughter now is, and
" whoſe character you yourſelf profeſs
" to reſpect, is no other than that Ame-

" lia, Mrs. Weſtbury's ſiſter, and your " Harriet's aunt.

" Now, Sir, will you give me leave " to obſerve, I am perſuaded your own " heart cannot be inſenſible to the ſoft " pleadings of nature, but that having " been at firſt led to an improper treat- " ment of your child, you do not know " how to entreat without acknowledging " it, you will therefore oblige me, if " you will requeſt Mrs. Weſtbury to " peruſe this letter. I believe ſhe at " preſent poſſeſſes influence enough to " prevail in any cauſe ſhe ſhall take in " hand; ſhe is requeſted to uſe that in- " fluence properly, and endeavour to " procure a return of favour from Mr. " Weſtbury to his daughter. Miſs " Weſtbury has ſome friends who are " ready to oblige her; amongſt thoſe are " Lord and Lady Bloomer, and from " thoſe Mrs. Weſtbury will fully under- " ſtand what ſhe has to expect.

" To

"To ſupply to this amiable girl the "place of the mother ſhe has loſt, is the "whole of my intention, but ſhe will "ſtill remain dependent on your reaſon-"able command. She will never diſ"poſe of herſelf without your appro-"bation, and in return only hopes ſome-"thing may be allowed to her own "inclinations. Every further informa-"tion, which you can poſſibly wiſh to "receive, I ſhall be happy to give you "in Harley-ſtreet, when you ſhall fa-"vour me with a viſit for that purpoſe.

"A. CARY."

CHAP. VII.

TO this letter Lady Cary received no anſwer, nor hearing any thing from Mr. Weſtbury for ſeveral days, ſhe concluded Mrs. Weſtbury's addreſs had defeated her intentions, and ſuppoſing him

wilfully blind, ſhe thought all further attempts to clear his viſual intellects, would be ridiculous; ſhe therefore gave up the idea, and turned all her thoughts to the reſtoration of Miſs Weſtbury's tranquillity, and the judicious management of the means neceſſary for perfecting her favourite wiſh.

But her ladyſhip had the mortification of finding herſelf leſs ſucceſsful than ſhe had expected, and began to fear ſhe had over-rated her abilities, when ſhe believed herſelf capable of happily conducting an affair where ſhe now met with nothing but difficulties.

No part of her views ſucceeded; the viſits of Sir William Burt became more frequent, but then his behaviour was ſo exceedingly guarded ſhe could make nothing of it; he paid great attention to Miſs Weſtbury, but it was a ſort of attention in the middle way, between affection and politeneſs; it expreſſed neither

ther diſtinctly, but ſeemed to partake of both.

SIR WILLIAM'S notions were rather more refined on the ſubject of matrimony than the generality of young men's; his own fortune was equal to all the purpoſes of his truly benevolent heart, which enabled him to chuſe the companion of his felicity, without being governed by pecuniary conſiderations, but then he wiſhed the woman of his choice might be actuated by ſentiments ſome what ſimilar to his own, and not induced to give him her hand, either merely to obtain the means of figuring in the faſhionable circles with more eclat, or to enfranchiſe her conduct from the direction of her parents, by becoming her own miſtreſs, without concerning herſelf in the leaſt, whether her paſſport to liberty, was a man of the world, or a man of the woods.

HE was, in fact, very much pleaſed with Miſs Weſtbury, but his admiration was more rational than paſſionate, and he

thought it moſt prudent to keep the ſecret to himſelf, till a further acquaintance ſhould enable him to judge how long it was likely ſhe might pleaſe him; ſhe had continued to riſe in his opinion every opportunity he had of ſtudying her character, but he had not yet arrived at ſufficient certainty, as to her requiſites for a wife, for him to pronounce finally one way or the other, and therefore he ſtill choſe to be ſilent.

LADY CARY likewiſe perceived Miſs Weſtbury's melancholy and dejection were rather increaſed than leſſened by Sir William's attention, and that ſhe appeared particularly reſerved whenever he was preſent, ſhe ſaw her ſpirits gained but very little by the exchange of ſituation, and began to fear the ſweet girl's happineſs was infinitely more diſtant than ſhe had at firſt been inclined to believe.

HARRIET's apprehenſions of Captain Claverly were now quieted, and that part of her anxiety ſubſided, but what little

ſhe

ſhe gained that way, ſhe ſoon loſt by perceiving the diſtinction of Sir William Burt, and the intereſt her aunt evidently took in his favour. Harriet's good and grateful heart, felt the moſt lively ſenſe of her obligations to Lady Cary, and ſhe dreaded nothing more than the neceſſity of acting incompatibly with the wiſhes of that lady, but ſhe was conſcious Sir William could never fill more than a ſecond place in her conſideration.

THE idea of her apoſtate lover's baſeneſs and ingratitude, ſtill dwelt on her mind, and ſhe found it impoſſible to forget her diſappointment: ſhe ſummoned all her reſolution to ſubdue her ill-placed partiality, and applied to her reaſon, and her pride, to aid her in the victory ſhe wiſhed to gain, but without ſucceſs; her efforts were fruitleſs, and Love, Almighty Love, triumphed over every obſtacle.

UNABLE to conquer, her next care was to conceal her affection, and ſhe endeavoured to appear tranquil and ſerene;

but vain was the endeavour, her capacity in the line of diſſimulation was infinitely too confined to paſs the ſcrutiny of her aunt's experience, who ſaw with real concern, the painful effects of her ſenſibility, and attempted to leſſen it, by every method ſhe could deviſe.

SOCIETY and amuſements of every kind were perpetually applied to, that her thought by being engaged by other objects, might be kept from turning on the ſubject of her unhappineſs; but Harriet's reflections were not to be diſſipated, wherever ſhe went they were her companions, ſhe carried them with her into the moſt crowded aſſemblies, and indulged the melancholy ſenſations of her own boſom, amidſt the glare of ſplendour, and in the gayeſt ſcenes.

MANY were the conſultations Lady Cary held with herſelf on this ſubject, but ſhe ſtill hoped time at laſt would ſtand her friend, ſhe therefore took no notice to Harriet that ſhe perceived her unhappi-

unhappineſs, not having it in her power to relieve it, but appeared ignorant of her wound, while ſhe adminiſtered every balm which ſhe thought could tend towards her cure.

CHAP. VIII.

THEY were ſitting one morning in the drawing-room, Lady Cary reading and Harriet employed with ſome drawing, when a gentle ſigh engaged the attention of her ladyſhip; turning her eyes to Miſs Weſtbury, ſhe beheld her entirely loſt in a profound reverie; every faculty ſeemed abſorbed in thought, while the ſilent tear ſtole unheeded down her cheek, it is impoſſible to deſcribe her ladyſhip's feelings at that moment; ſhe ſat contemplating the picture of refined diſtreſs with an aching heart, while ſhe was inſenſibly led into a train of reflecti-

ons

ons on the nature of human happineſs in general, and the inſufficiency of one individual for aſcertaining the notions of another's felicity by their own.

SOFTENED to an exceſs of tenderneſs by the ſweet girl's woe-fraught appearance, ſhe felt her deſire of ſeeing her ſplendidly diſtinguiſhed, gradually ſubſide, and give place to a ſincere wiſh of making her domeſtically happy; ſhe tenderly ſympathiſed in her ſufferings, and regretted the impropriety of reſtoring her tranquillity by favouring an attachment which ſhe perceived had taken ſuch deep root in her heart.

LADY CARY's reflections were interrupted by the arrival of Sir William Burt, and with a view of ſtealing Miſs Weſtbury from herſelf, her ladyſhip requeſted him to conduct them to the play in the evening.

SIR William replied, that five minutes ago he was the happieſt man in the world, but

but that her ladyſhip had abſolutely damped the joy of his heart, by offering him an honour which it was not in his power to accept, "I am this evening," ſaid he, "to embrace a friend that I have not ſeen "theſe three years; and I would not loſe "that pleaſure a moment by being ab-"ſent when he arrives on any conſidera-"tion, no not even to have the honour "of attending your ladyſhip."

LADY CARY obſerved, he paid his friend no common compliment!

SIR WILLIAM replied, he was no common friend. He then proceeded to give an account of him, in the warmeſt terms, and paid the moſt liberal and affectionate compliments to the merits of his head and heart. "I aſſure you, madam" ſaid he, "it is impoſſible to deſcribe him with "any degree of juſtice. In a word, he "is as ſenſible as your ladyſhip, and "as handſome as Miſs Weſtbury, and "it is impoſſible to ſay any more.——— "But excluſive of his merit he is en-

"deared

" deared to me by his misfortunes. He " has met with disappointments, the na- " ture of which I am as yet unacquainted " with. I heard of it by accident, and " immediately offered him the half of my " fortune, which his honest pride would " not permit him to accept; but I have " now an opportunity of raising him to " independence, in a manner his delicacy " cannot disapprove, and this evening I " hope to receive him."

LADY CARY paid a compliment to his sentiments, and professed herself curious to see so extraordinary a character, and Sir William retired.

CHAP. IX.

HER ladyship, sincerely wishing to divert the melancholy of Miss Westbury, engaged a small party of friends to accompany her to the theatre in the evening; the play was the Clandestine

deſtine Marriage; Miſs Weſtbury was extremely affected, and wept her own, in the diſtreſs of Fanny.

On leaving their box, they found the lobby exceedingly crowded, owing to its being a wet evening, and the difficulty of getting coaches. Miſs Weſtbury was walking by the arm of her aunt, when the alarm of a pick-pocket turned the crowd with immenſe rapidity in an oppoſite direction. She found herſelf ſuddenly ſeparated from her party, and borne away by the torrent to the other end of the paſſage. She attempted to regain her friends, but found it impoſſible, and ſaw herſelf ſurrounded by ſtrangers; her appearance attracted every eye; a young lady, dreſt, and entirely alone, was too ſingular to paſs unobſerved. She was accoſted with expreſſions of impertinent admiration on every ſide, and her confuſion was inſupportable; when the appearance of captain Cleverly reſtored her to new life. He bowed as he paſt her, without perceiving how ſhe was circumſtanced; but Harriet, whoſe ſituation was terrifying to a degree,

a degree, without thinking of former affairs, inſtantly accoſted him, informed him of her diſtreſs, and begged his protection. The captain had too much gallantry to refuſe aſſiſting any lady on ſuch an occaſion. He offered her his hand, and conducted her from the crowd; and having procured her a chair, he begged ſhe would not alarm herſelf, for that ſhe might be aſſured he would not leave her, till he had ſeen her ſafe to the houſe of her friend. When he made this promiſe he had no idea of breaking it; but the revolution of a few moments furniſhed him with very different ſentiments.

Miss Westbury's elopement had entirely cruſhed the captain's hopes of a permanent eſtabliſhment by her means, but he could only accuſe his ill ſtars, as his ſiſter had exculpated herſelf from every ſhadow of complaint, by the very active and artful part ſhe had taken in Miſs Weſtbury's perſecution. All dependance of that kind being at an end, he was obliged again to ſubmit to Mrs. Weſtbu-

ry's

ry's intereſt for the continual repleniſhment of his purſe, but the remittances furniſhed by her being too trifling for his purpoſe, he was forced to apply to his own ingenuity for the more liberal increaſe of his finances. The gaming-table was his reſource on thoſe occaſions, and being well ſkilled in all the various artifices for inſuring ſucceſs, and not tied down by principle to the moſt honourable practices, he ſeldom failed of finding his account fully anſwered. He ſometimes indeed, when he found his ſlight of hand was detected, met with little rebuffs, not of the moſt pleaſing kind; but the captain was a practical philoſopher, and treated a pulling by the noſe, or a kicking down ſtairs, with all the coolneſs of a ſtoic. He had juſt received a little diſcipline of this kind, which had very much ſoured his temper. It was not ſo much the indignity which offended him, as the loſs of a pretty large ſum, which he had conſidered as already in his poſſeſſion, when the unfairneſs of his proceedings was diſcovered by his antagoniſt;

goniſt; and the conſequence was, his being ſent down ſtairs in the ignominious manner before mentioned. His diſappointment was uppermoſt in his mind when he accidentally met Miſs Weſtbury, and her appearance did not tend to leſſen his mortification in the leaſt.

He had accompanied the chair but a ſhort diſtance, when Harriet's fortune very forcibly recurred to his remembrance, and he could not help perſuading himſelf, as accident had placed her ſo entirely in his power, it would be highly impolitic to neglect any opportunity which could poſſibly ariſe from it.

The captain was ſtrongly inclined to prefer a certainty to a contingency; he was perfectly ſecure of ſharing the ſpoils of Mr. Weſtbury's fortune, but then there was a neceſſity of waiting till that gentleman ſhould firſt ſleep with his fathers: he therefore conceived it would be beſt to marry Harriet, as the only mode of removing his preſent difficulties, and, ſettling

ſettling his independence beyond a doubt at once.

Mr. Westbury's violent reſolution againſt his daughter he conſidered of no conſequence. He believed his ſiſter could influence her huſband to any thing, and ſhe dared not refuſe employing her perſuaſive talents, in any manner he ſhould direct. By her aſſiſtance he made no doubt he ſhould eaſily reſtore Harriet to her father's favour, could he but prevail on her to accept the offer of his hand. As the firſt ſtep of his precipitate plan, he ſounded the chairmen, and found them prone to his purpoſe; he accordingly left them to make preparation in another place. At a proper time, one of them received a violent fall by his foot's ſlipping from the pavement: his leg was broke, and, of courſe, it was impoſſible to proceed. A crowd began to gather round the chair, and Miſs Weſtbury was in the utmoſt agony of diſtreſs, when the appearance of the attentive captain again quieted her fears. He lamented the unfortunate

fortunate accident, and begged her to compoſe herſelf, aſſuring her ſhe had nothing to apprehend, and intreated her permiſſion to conduct her to a place of ſafety, till another carriage of ſome kind could be procured.

Miss Westbury was too much frightened to attend to circumſtances. She threw herſelf with implicit confidence into the arms of her protector, who immediately led her to one of the very convenient habitations, ſet apart for the reception of ladies and gentlemen, whoſe converſation requires a particular degree of ſecrecy.

On a ſervant's appearing at the door, the captain enquired for his miſtreſs, and deſiring ſhe might be informed a young lady of character had met with an accident in the ſtreet, and that he ſhould be obliged to her for the uſe of a room, till a chair could be obtained to convey her home. The lady's compliments were very ſoon returned, requeſting the young lady

lady would make uſe of her houſe as long as ſhould be neceſſary, and that ſhe was herſelf extremely ſorry it was not in her power to receive her, but that ſhe had been confined to her room ſeveral days, by indiſpoſition. The apology was both ſatisfactory and polite; they were uſhered into a back drawing-room, and the ſervant was diſpatched in ſearch of a chair immediately.

CHAP. X.

AS Miſs Weſtbury's firſt confuſion abated, ſhe began to think of her preſent ſituation. The captain's behaviour was particulaly attentive, but ſhe recollected the evaſive part ſhe herſelf had acted, and the little reaſon he had to be pleaſed with her conduct relative to himſelf, and ſhe did not ſuppoſe he could poſſibly forget his diſappointment.

She

She likewiſe remembered his very doubtful character, and felt the impropriety of confiding in a man, whoſe principles were ever ſubſervient to his convenience.

WHILE ſhe was thus tormenting herſelf by the anticipation of evils, the captain was embarraſſed by feelings of a different kind. He knew Miſs Weſtbury was entirely in his power, but he was at a loſs in what manner to inform her ſhe was ſo; he felt all the ſuperior conſequence of virtue, and tho' he conceived the impoſſibility of her eſcaping the toils into which he had led her, yet the innocent dignity of her countenance, and the innate littleneſs of conſcious vice, effectually tied his tongue whenever he attempted to enter on the ſubject of his deſigns. They however kept up a ſort of vague unconnected converſation, till Harriet, who had frequently expreſt her uneaſineſs on the ſervant's not returning, inſiſted on walking to lady Cary's, without further delay.

THE

THE captain had been mentally canvaſſing the various methods of informing Miſs Weſtbury of his intentions in the moſt delicate manner, but finding it impoſſible to amuſe her any longer, he dropped the idea of circumlocution, and conceived he might as well inform her of the nature of her ſituation at once.

HE began by lamenting his unhappineſs that he ſhould be deſtined to incur her diſpleaſure in the moſt trifling degree; that the exceſs of his affection was the only excuſe he could offer for the ſtep he had been tempted to take, in return for the diſappointment ſhe had occaſioned him a few weeks before; that he had long adored her infinitely above every other earthly being, and it was the ardency of that adoration, which led him once more to enquire if it were poſſible for him to obtain a ſufficient portion of her favour, to induce her to honour him with her hand.

MISS WESTBURY ſhuddered at the propoſal, but conceiving it neceſſary to conceal her terror, if poſſible, replied, ſhe was entirely unprepared for a ſubject of that kind at preſent; ſhe wiſhed to return home exceedingly, and very civilly requeſted he would be kind enough to attend her.

THE captain ſaid he was extremely ſorry it was not in his power to indulge her, but there was a neceſſity for her explaining her ſentiments, before ſhe could poſſibly quit that place.

HARRIET expreſſed her aſtoniſhment at his language, but preſumed he would hardly venture to oppoſe her departure whenever ſhe thought proper.

THE captain aſſured her ſhe was miſtaken; that her cruelty had made him deſperate; ſhe might depend on his affection for the delicacy of her treatment, if ſhe conſented to favour his wiſhes,

but

but that ſhe could not depart till he knew what he was to expect.

HARRIET gave him a look of inexpreſſible diſdain, "I think," ſaid ſhe, "when I left my father's houſe to avoid "a marriage with you, I gave a very "ſtriking explanation of my ſentiments, "and your preſent behaviour is not cal- "culated to alter my opinion in the "leaſt;" ſhe immediately roſe to ring the bell, for the purpoſe of requeſting the attendance of a ſervant to Harley-ſtreet, but the captain interrupted her.

"My dear Miſs Weſtbury," ſaid he, "this bell is dumb, and you are in a "houſe, the inhabitants of which nei- "ther hear or ſee, but as their employers "dictate; every creature here at pre- "ſent, is at my command, nor will any "one enter this apartment till they have "my permiſſion ſo to do; you are en- "tirely in my power, and aſſure your- "ſelf, I did not conduct you to this "place with a view of your quitting it

" when you pleaſed;—you have in
" reality nothing to complain of; if I
" have deceived you, it is but retaliation,
" you very lately deceived me; I do not
" betray your confidence, you repoſed
" none in me—but truſted me from ne-
" ceſſity, and not from choice: I am in-
" debted to an accidental concurrence
" of circumſtances for my preſent good
" fortune; yet you ſee me uſe it with in-
" finite moderation, I ſolicit, when I may
" command, and am content to make
" you the miſtreſs of my fate, when I am
" maſter of your's. I wiſh not to make
" you uneaſy, but I am determined as to
" my proceedings;—conſent but to com-
" plete my hapineſs, by becoming my
" wife, and every hour of my future
" life ſhall be devoted to a grateful diſ-
" charge of the obligation, but exiſtence
" without you is inſupportable. All at-
" tempts to deceive me, by evaſive re-
" plies, will be ineffectual, my meaſures
" are taken infallibly. Remember Mr.
" Weſtbury's approbation is in my fa-
" vour, which precludes every objection

" of

" of that kind, you muſt therefore " oblige me by remaining where you " now are, till a ſpecial licence can be " obtained to fix your conſent beyond a " poſſibility of receding; you are ſe- " cure of my reſpect if you conſent to " my terms, but if you refuſe them, you " are ſecure of nothing.

When the captain ceaſed, Miſs Weſtbury was unable to reply, ſhe believed him capable of taking every advantage her ſituation could poſſibly furniſh him with, but at the ſame time conceiving her fortune, and not her perſon, was the great object of the captain's deſigns, ſhe concluded his attention was only to intimidate her into compliance, and ſhe believed his addreſs calculated for that purpoſe; for allowing him to be full as baſe as ſhe was inclined to ſuſpect, ſhe had no idea he would dare offer her the leaſt violence, if he found ſhe had courage ſufficient to deſpiſe his menaces.

THE firſt emotions of her terror gave place to reſentment, and ſhe upbraided him with the ſpecious villainy of his whole conduct, in the ſevereſt terms, told him her ſoul deteſted the moſt diſtant thoughts of allying itſelf with a wretch, ſo thoroughly hackneyed in the paths of vice; that though his artifices had ſucceeded in driving her from her paternal home, yet ſtill ſhe was not unprotected, and he might depend upon it his preſent outrage ſhould not eſcape with impunity; ſhe warned him againſt giving her any further cauſe of complaint, and aſſured him ſhe would never receive for her huſband, a hireling, who had been diſmiſſed the ſervice of his employer for the infamy of his practices. She then advanced towards the door without expecting any interruption, but the captain caught her in his arms, and proceeded to treat her with the moſt ſhocking indelicacy.

SHE ſcreamed with terror and reſentment!—He only ſmiled, at what he termed

termed, " the fruitleſs exertions of her " pretty ſpirit," without receding in the leaſt from his attempt.

FINDING her ſtrength inſufficient to procure her freedom, or repel the brutal inſolence of his behaviour, ſhe was reduced to the neceſſity of entreating his forbearance, but he ſilenced her at once, by ſolemnly proteſting nothing ſhould ſave her, unleſs ſhe immediately complied with his propoſal.

HIS actions correſponding with his word, her indignation betrayed itſelf in a ſecond ſcream; when contrary to the captain's expectation, the door was ſuddenly forced open.

HARRIET inſtantly flew towards her deliverer; but ſhe was not more pleaſed with the interpoſition of providence in her favour, than ſhe was ſurprized to find her friend Mr. Lewiſham in the perſon of her preſent protector.

The captain was naturally extremely averſe to deeds of mortal purpoſe, but when he perceived the clerical appearance of his interruptor, he felt himſelf bold, not entertaining any great idea of parſonic valour; he put on a moſt terrific kind of countenance, laid his hand on his ſword, frowned, and looked big; but a moment after, on the entry of Sir William Burt, the captain's greatneſs all at once ſunk to nothing, he wiſhed to avoid that gentleman's preſence by ſhrinking into himſelf, and for the firſt time in his life, felt ſomewhat like a ſenſation of ſhame.

Sir William's aſtoniſhment was inexpreſſible, he viewed every part of the groupe without being able to comprehend the meaning of what he ſaw; but a few hours before he left Miſs Weſtbury with Lady Cary, and he now found her in a houſe, every way improper for the reception of a lady of character. From the appearance of the captain it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe he was materially concerned

cerned in this myſterious adventure, his countenance betrayed the ſtrongeſt marks of guilt, and while Sir William viewed him from head to foot with the moſt unfriendly aſpect, the daſtardly culprit trembled at the terror of his eye.

CHAP. XI.

MR. LEWISHAM was too much engaged with Miſs Weſtbury to attend to the behaviour of his friend, her ſpirits were harraſſed and fatigued by the violent agitation they had undergone, and it was with much difficulty ſhe ſupported the tumultuous influx of pleaſing ſenſations, which the firſt aſſurance of her ſafety occaſioned.

LEWISHAM hung over her with the moſt affectionate concern, and made uſe of every tender epithet to compoſe the con-

flict in her boſom, he held her in his arms, and her head reclined on his breaſt while he ſoothed her to a forgetfulneſs of the paſt, by the gentleſt expreſſions his fond heart could dictate.

THIS part of the ſcene was altogether as unaccountable to Sir William as the other, Lewiſham's language and actions beſpoke the paſſionate lover, and by the confidential eaſe of Miſs Weſtbury's behaviour, it was evident ſhe conſidered him as a perſon in whoſe preſence it was unneceſſary to reſtrain her emotions.

WHEN the firſt ſurprize and hurry was a little abated, Lewiſham recollected the villainous author of this confuſion, but on enquiring, they found the captain had taken advantage of their inattention, to make his eſcape from the ſcene of his diſgrace.

THE lady of the manſion was next deſired to attend, but ſhe had likewiſe withdrawn herſelf, the captain had offered

fered her a very high price to preſerve a perfect neutrality during the whole of his proceedings, but the concluſion being accidentally taken up by a couple of new actors, ſhe was juſtly inclined to fear they would reward her in a different manner. Sir William vented the overflowing of his rage in a few unconnected expletives, and threats of vengeance, and conceiving Miſs Weſtbury muſt be exceedingly uneaſy while ſhe remained in a place ſhe had ſo much reaſon to deteſt, he commanded a trembling attendant to procure a chair, and directed it to be carried to Lady Cary's, whither himſelf and friend accompanied it.

Sir William was not more ſurprized at Lewiſham's affectionate attention to Miſs Weſtbury, or at hearing him call her his beloved, his adored Harriet, which he had frequently done, in the unguarded warmth of his heart, than Mr. Lewiſham was at Sir William's familiar addreſs, and his ordering her to be carried to Lady Cary's; but as ſoon as they

were at liberty to converſe, the natural queſtions were mutually aſked, and ſatisfactory information mutually given; Sir William explained the natury of his acquaintance with Miſs Weſtbury, and, in return, Mr. Lewiſham fully informed his friend of the firſt riſe, and ſincere continuance of his attachment, and that he flattered himſelf Miſs Weſtbury did not conſider him in an indifferent light.

Sir William was of the ſame opinion, from his obſervation of Harriet's behaviour, and congratulated him on his ſucceſs, without envying his good fortune. He aſſured him though he more than eſteemed Miſs Weſtbury for the beauty and delicacy of her perſon and manners, yet ſo far from being any interruption to the completion of his happineſs, he would promote it all in his power.

When they arrived in Harley-ſtreet, they found Lady Cary in the utmoſt diſtreſs. She had waited at the theatre, while every avenue was traverſed over and

and over, in ſearch of her niece, but without effect, as the captain had conveyed her away long before ſhe had been able to reach her carriage. She returned home dreadfully alarmed for the dear girl's ſafety, and diſpatched meſſengers every way in queſt of her, with the offer of a large reward to him, who ſhould be lucky enough to bring her the firſt intelligence. Several were returned, after a fruitleſs ſearch, and her ladyſhip was in the moſt anxious ſuſpenſe, when ſhe was informed of their arrival.

Sir William firſt appeared. He preſented Miſs Weſtbury, and introduced his friend as the perſon to whoſe provident interpoſition ſhe was indebted for her preſervation.

Lady Cary thanked them, in the warmeſt and ſincereſt terms, and the joy of her heart appeared in her countenance. She embraced her niece with all the unfeigned affection of a parent, and aſked queſtion after queſtion, with a rapidity which

which entirely precluded all poſſibility of an anſwer, till Sir William, who was juſt then the only perſon capable of acting rationally, requeſted Miſs Weſtbury might retire, conceiving ſhe muſt ſtand very much in need of reſt. His prudent advice was accordingly followed, and Harriet withdrew.

When Lady Cary's firſt tranſports began to give place to her natural compoſure, ſhe begged to be informed where they had fortunately met with Miſs Weſtbury. Sir William explained what they knew of the affair, giving the whole merit to his friend; and her Ladyſhip was exceedingly ſurprized, when ſhe underſtood that friend was the identical Mr. Lewiſham, whoſe idea, as the lover of her niece, had given her ſo much uneaſineſs, and that Miſs Weſtbury again owed her deliverance, to the very man, who had once before preſerved her life at the imminent hazard of his own. She made no mention of her ſentiments at that time, but having acknowledged herſelf infinitely

nitely obliged to them for the ſervice they had rendered Miſs Weſtbury, ſhe requeſted they would do her the honour of breakfaſting with her next morning, which they accordingly promiſed to do, and retired.

When Lady Cary was alone, ſhe could not help reflecting, with horror, on the audacious villainy of the captain, in daring to detain, and treat with violence, a young lady of character, who was under the protection of a powerful friend. Her thoughts were inſenſibly led from thence to the myſterious methods by which Divine Providence is content to manifeſt, and adapt its power to the neceſſity and convenience of human beings. She conceived the goodneſs of Heaven was never more apparent, or brought about by leſs expected means, than in the preſent inſtance. How many trifling incidents had concurred, and fallen in with each other, to give riſe to an event, which ſhe had ſincerely wiſhed might never take place, yet but for that event, the conſequence

of

of thoſe incidents muſt have been fatal to her peace. She reflected on every circumſtance, till ſhe conceived the immediate direction of a ſuperior and beneficent being was evident in the whole; and though ſhe was ſtill ignorant how Harriet had been led into the ſituation in which Lewiſham found her, ſhe was ſenſible from what they had informed her of the nature of that ſituation, that none of the meſſengers ſhe had diſpatched would have ſtood the leaſt chance of recovering her, and therefore all her premeditated endeavours muſt have been inſufficient to have yielded her the aſſiſtance, which they had been enabled accidentally to do, without entertaining any idea of the kind.

She had obſerved the perſon of Lewiſham with great attention, and found ſomething in his appearance which intereſted her exceedingly in his favour; his figure was uncommonly elegant, and he had an inexpreſſible ſomething, an inſinuating eaſe, a kind of ſpeaking grace in all his actions, which ſhe was ſenſible could

could be only the natural reſult of a polite education, and an intercourſe with the well-bred part of mankind.

She remembered the amiable colours in which Harriet had drawn him on their firſt acquaintance, and allowing a little for the partiality of the painter, yet there remained enough, when joined with Sir William's favourable account of him in the morning, to perſuade her he muſt really poſſeſs a very uncommon degree of merit. She wiſhed to hear his hiſtory of himſelf, and entertained a hope of finding ſome favourable circumſtances, which might authorize and juſtify her, in wiſhing to promote the happineſs of two perſons, one of which the hand of Heaven ſeemed evidently to have created as the preſerver and protector of the other.

In the morning ſhe prevented Miſs Weſtbury's riſing to breakfaſt, by entering her chamber earlier than uſual. She inquired the particulars of the laſt night's adven-

adventure, and Harriet immediately informed her of every circumſtance which the confuſion of her ſituation enabled her to recollect. When ſhe had concluded the tale of her diſtreſs, Lady Cary perceived the fertility of the captain's invention and villainy was really wonderful, that he could in a moment form, adjuſt, and execute a plan of the kind, in a manner ſo perfectly ſecure of ſucceſs, but for the intervention of a miracle.

FROM her danger they were naturally led to ſpeak of her deliverance. Her ladyſhip expreſſed herſelf extremely pleaſed with Mr. Lewiſham's appearance, and mentioned his perſon and addreſs in very advantageous terms, but ſaid nothing of her intention. Miſs Weſtbury ſighed, but made no anſwer to her aunt's encomiums on her lover.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

SIR WILLIAM BURT had given Mr. Lewiſham every information relative to the conſanguinity of Lady Cary and Miſs Weſtbury, and he likewiſe explained the circumſtances of Mr. Weſtbury's imprudent connexions, and the reaſons which had compelled Harriet to eſcape from her father's family; and further informed him, to his very great ſurprize, that the man, from whoſe brutality they had juſt reſcued Miſs Weſtbury, was no other than her mother's pretended brother, to whom, that no part of ſuch a valuable family ſhould be loſt, Mr. Weſtbury had been ſo deſirous of marrying his daughter.

MR. LEWISHAM expreſſed his indignation at the unworthy treatment the ſweet girl had received, and obſerved, he was very ſure the perſon of the captain was not entirely unknown to him, but that he could not recollect where, or on what occaſion

occaſion he had before been introduced to his notice.

We preſume it is unneceſſary to inform our readers, that Mr. Lewiſham was the friend whoſe expected arrival prevented Sir William Burt's accompanying Lady Cary and Miſs Weſtbury to the play; but we conceive it highly neceſſary, for the credit of Mr. Lewiſham, that we ſhould explain the accident which had brought him ſo very ſeaſonably to Harriet's deliverance.

Sir William Burt and Mr. Lewiſham had long experienced a ſincere and reciprocal eſteem for each other. It commenced with their acquaintance at ſchool, and from thence accompanied them to the univerſity, where they were generally diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of the friends, and their attachment was not only cemented by mutual pleaſures, but mutual convenience. Mr. Lewiſham's diſpoſition was naturally inclined to gravity, and Sir William's extremely volatile;

tile; and the coolneſs and deliberation of the one was ſingularly ſerviceable to the other, in extricating him from the difficulties into which he was frequently led by the ungovernable vivacity of his temper.

THEY had never met, from the time Sir William left the univerſity, who ſoon after had been informed of the unexpected change in Mr. Lewiſham's affairs, which had induced him to throw himſelf into the boſom of the church. He wrote to him immediately the warm dictates of his liberal heart, requeſting him to come and take a brother's ſhare of the large poſſeſſion fortune had given to his command; but Lewiſham dared not receive an obligation, which there was no probability of his returning; and he remained inflexible to the lure of friendſhip, while it tempted him in the ſhape of pecuniary favour.

A VALUABLE living in Sir William's gift became vacant, he inſtantly remembered

bered his old friend, and conceived he could now offer a tribute to friendſhip, which the niceſt delicacy could find no reaſon to diſapprove, he wrote to him immediately, requeſting he might ſee him in London; Lewiſham complied; could he do otherwiſe? when love and gratitude ſeconded the invitation.

They had ſpent the evening at a neighbouring coffee-houſe, and were returning through ——— ſtreet, when a chair paſſed them, and ſtopped at the houſe into which the captain had juſt before conducted Miſs Weſtbury. Sir William being well acquainted with this temple of intrigue, was deſirous of ſeeing the preſent votary, and a ſudden motion of the chairmen gave him that ſatisfaction by ſeparating the curtains which were before cloſe drawn on every ſide; he recogniſed the face of a female he well knew, and curioſity excited an inclination to learn in whoſe favour ſhe had been induced to attend an aſſignation at this place: "That woman," ſaid he to Lewiſham,

Lewiſham, " is the greateſt inſtance of " infamy, artifice, and ingratitude that " ever exiſted, but let us go in, and en- " deavour to ſee who is her preſent pa- " ramour, I apprehend he is a particular " friend of mine, but if ſo, as he is a " man of real honour, I am convinced " his conduct can only ariſe from his ig- " norance of her circumſtances.

THEY accordingly entered, and made choice of a back parlour commanding a full view of the ſtairs, where they had not remained long, when the gentleman Sir William expected made his appearance, and enquired for the lady before-mentioned. Sir William accoſted him without ceremony, and begged to ſpeak with him in private, having ſomething of conſequence to communicate.

MR. LEWISHAM had been only a moment left by himſelf when he was alarmed by a ſcream, which ſeemed to proceed from a room above that in which he was ſitting, he ſtarted from his ſeat, and liſten-

liſtened with attention; he conceived he heard a faint murmur like diſtant converſation, in a voice perfectly familiar to his ear.

EVERY idea of Miſs Weſtbury was too forcibly impreſſed upon the mind of Lewiſham, for him to remain a moment in doubt, he flew up the ſtairs, and reached the door juſt as Harriet ſcreamed a ſecond time, he burſt into the room, fraught with vengeance againſt the author of her terror, but her appearance, flying to to his arms, in a moment diverted his inauſpicious glance from the captain, and drew with magnetic influence, all his attention to herſelf.

IN the interval, Sir William explained his ſentiments to his friend reſpecting the before-mentioned lady, and when he had informed him of the perfidy and ingratitude with which ſhe returned the affection of a man, who had raiſed her to affluence, and ſecured her from infamy; he was ſo effectually diſguſted by the

the unprecedented blackneſs and depravity of her heart, that he left the houſe without making any further enquiry concerning her, and Sir William followed his friend to the ſcene of Miſs Weſtbury's diſtreſs, as we before related.

CHAP. XIII.

IN the morning they attended Lady Cary agreeable to her invitation, and when the apparatus of the breakfaſt table was removed, her ladyſhip addreſſed herſelf to Mr. Lewiſham:—"I make "no doubt, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "but that "Sir William has informed you of the "ſituation in which I ſtand with reſpect "to Miſs Weſtbury; the ſervice which "you rendered my niece laſt night has "laid me under an obligation which I "fear it will never be in my power to "return, convinced as I am there is but "one

" one method of doing it; Harriet's
" amiable heart is above concealment
" or diſguiſe, ſhe informed me with ho-
" neſt confidence of your mutual attach-
" ment; I confeſs to you, Mr. Lewiſham,
" I conſidered this attachment as a real
" misfortune, and have done all in my
" power to ſuppreſs it, but without ef-
" fect, and I am now perſuaded it is too
" deeply rooted in Miſs Weſtbury's breaſt
" ever to be removed; when I reflect
" on the adventure of yeſterday, and
" your ſucceſs on a prior occaſion, I
" cannot help thinking but that you
" muſt have been aided and conducted
" by ſupernatural direction, I have got
" the better of an opinion which I ac-
" knowledge to have been illiberal and
" unjuſt, and am now as ſincerely inclined
" to favour your happineſs, as I was to
" oppoſe it; I wiſh you to make me ac-
" quainted with your family and ſitua-
" tion, and if you can give me but the
" ſhadow of reaſon for becoming your
" friend, be aſſured I ſhall moſt willing-
" ly make uſe of it.

Mr.

MR. LEWISHAM expreſſed himſelf gratefully ſenſible of her ladyſhip's goodneſs, but declared he was unable to derive the leaſt benefit from her condeſcenſion: "I adore Miſs Weſtbury," ſaid he, "I "cannot help it, but my affection is as "pure as herſelf, and I ever conſidered "her infinitely above my moſt preſumptuous hopes; accident threw me into "a ſituation, where her charms, continually in my view, prevailed againſt the "dictates of reaſon, and I loſt my peace "in the unequal conteſt. I know nothing of myſelf which can give your "ladyſhip the leaſt ſatisfaction, and there "is a natural propenſity in the human "breaſt, inclining us to ſuſpect every "recital relative to ourſelves, which is "not calculated to favour our vanity; "I have been influenced by this propenſity, but my ſelf-love ſhall give place "to your ladyſhip's gratification."

"I MAY be ſaid to have found myſelf "when about ſix years old, at a little "ſchool, in a village a few miles from

" London; from that time I began to " obſerve ſome circumſtances attending " me very different from my companions; " I was never viſited by any one but my " father, and at the cuſtomary holidays, " when my ſchool-fellows departed with " the moſt lively joy for their reſpective " habitations, I was left alone, melancho- " ly and forlorn, and was never taken a- " way on any occaſion.

" THESE mortifications affected me " the more, as the force of reflection " became ſtronger, till one day our houſe " was deſerted by all its juvenile inhabi- " tants, and I was lamenting the cruelty " of my fate, when I was bleſt with the " unexpected appearance of my father; " he enquired the cauſe of my grief, " which I immediately explained, and " earneſtly requeſted him to take me " home; he ſeemed very much affected " by my tears, and ſoothed me with a " promiſe of returning in a day or two, " and that he would then certainly take " me with him.

" The

"THE next day he came again, ac-
"companied by another gentleman whom
"I had never before ſeen; they took
"me out to walk with them, and aſked
"me a variety of queſtions; I was happy
"enough to pleaſe them by my replies,
"and when we were returning, the
"ſtranger taking me by the hand, and
"looking at my father, how is it poſſible,
"ſaid he, for a parent, not deſtitute of
"ſenſe and humanity, to neglect ſuch a
"child as this; do, Lewiſham, take him
"home with you, ſend him to Eton, and
"I will oblige my brother to provide for
"him properly.

"I WAS accordingly removed to town
"that evening, and the next day I ac-
"companied my father to his houſe at
"Windſor, I remained with him ſeveral
"months, and thought myſelf in a new
"world; he treated me with a tenderneſs
"truly paternal, and I felt a ſincere re-
"turn of duty and affection.

" I was ſoon after placed at Eton,
" which gave riſe to my firſt acquaintance
" with Sir William Burt, every atten-
" tion was here paid to my education,
" and every maſter whoſe inſtruction
" could add to the uſeful or ornamental
" man, was employed to improve me in
" the ſcience he profeſt. When I was
" about ſeventeen, the gentleman who
" had adviſed my firſt removal, came to
" ſee me again; he converſed with me
" on the different parts of my education,
" and paid me a great many compli-
" ments on the improvement I had made;
" he conſulted me on my taſte and in-
" clination for the Arts and Sciences;
" recommended the learned profeſſions
" to my attention, and pointed out their
" advantages and difficulties reſpectively;
" and concluded with obſerving nothing
" was ſo pernicious to the youthful mind
" as idleneſs, the ideas muſt have an
" object of conſequence to collect and
" unite them together, for want of which
" they would moſt likely become too
" active, or too indolent, if the firſt,

" they

" they would afterwards fix on nothing,
" if the laſt, nothing would fix on them;
" he conceived moderate exerciſe was as
" neceſſary for the mind as the body, he
" would therefore adviſe me to make
" choice of ſome particular ſtudy to
" which my attention might be more
" immediately directed, by that means,
" if in future I had occaſion to make
" uſe of it, I ſhould be already prepared,
" and if I had not, he did not believe I
" ſhould find any inconvenience from an
" unneceſſary acquaintance of that
" kind.

" I ACKNOWLEDGED the juſtice of his
" obſervation, and expreſt myſelf in fa-
" vour of divinity; he commended my
" choice, and ſaid he would ſpeak to my
" father on the ſubject.

" THIS gentleman excited my curioſity,
" his viſits were not very frequent, nor
" was there any thing ſingular in his be-
" haviour, and yet all my movements
" ſeemed to be under his direction. I

" had repeatedly aſked my father trifling
" queſtions concerning him; to which
" he made evaſive replies, I was now
" particularly inquiſitive, and at laſt he
" anſwered, " My dear Edward, he is
" a worthy friend of mine, and he is a
" worthy friend of your's, you are under
" infinite obligations to him, the nature
" of which will ſome day be explained.
" I ſpoke in favour of the preſent mo-
" ment, but he refuſed in a tone of voice
" which ſilenced me effectually.

" In a few days I was ſettled at the
" Univerſity, with permiſſion to draw for
" two hundred per annum; in this ſitua-
" tion I remained till about two years
" ago, when I received intelligence, by
" a meſſenger expreſs, that my father
" was dangerouſly ill, and deſired to ſee
" me inſtantly; when I arrived at his
" houſe, I found him ſpeechleſs, but
" perfectly ſenſible; he ſeemed pleaſed
" to ſee me, preſſed my hand with the
" utmoſt tenderneſs, and made ſeveral
" attempts to articulate, but in vain; he

" then

" then ſignified a deſire to write; accord-
" ingly a pen and ink was given him,
" and I ſupported him; he waved his
" hand for me to attend, while with
" much difficulty he wrote, " My dear
" Edward, you have been deceived, I am
" not your father, you are the ſon of"—
" but death cut ſhort the ſentence; he
" ſunk back in my arms, and expired.

" YOUR ladyſhip can form no con-
" ception of the ſurpriſe in which I was
" involved by this imperfect information;
" I ſometimes perſuaded myſelf it could
" be nothing more than the effect of
" a diſordered imagination; but the
" clearneſs and conſiſtency of his actions,
" till the moment of his diſſolution,
" contradicted the probability of that
" ſuppoſition.

" HIS behaviour to me had ever been
" that of a tender and affectionate pa-
" rent, joined to a ſenſible and experi-
" enced friend, and I can truly aver, I
" regarded him with all the warmth of

" filial gratitude and reſpect; I knew of
" no perſon who could aſſiſt me in clear-
" ing up the painful ambiguity.

" I NEVER heard Mr. Lewiſham men-
" tion any relation, and whenever I at-
" tempted to make any domeſtic enqui-
" ries, he anſwered with the utmoſt im-
" patience, and deſired to know if I had
" any wants which he could not ſatisfy.

" While I was reflecting on this ſub-
" ject, a thought occurred, from which
" I promiſed myſelf great ſatisfaction.
" I recollected the Banker on whom, by
" Mr. Lewiſham's deſire, I had ſome-
" times drawn for my annual allowance,
" and did not doubt but he could furniſh
" me with the information I ſo earneſtly
" deſired; I ſet off for London immedi-
" ately, but when I arrived, my diſap-
" pointment was as ſevere as my hopes
" had been ſanguine; I found the houſe
" ſhut up, and on enquiring at a neigh-
" bouring tavern, I was informed that a
" failure had taken place to a conſidera-
" ble

" ble amount ſome time before, and
" they believed the people were gone
" abroad.

" My ideas now naturally turned to the
" gentleman before mentioned, but I
" could not ſuppoſe myſelf his ſon; his be-
" haviour was nothing more then friend-
" ly, I therefore concluded myſelf an
" orphan, ſupported by his humanity,
" which I conceived muſt be the obliga-
" tion Mr. Lewiſham alluded to. My
" ignorance of my benefactor gave me
" extreme uneaſineſs, but he had recom-
" mended a clerical life, and was cer-
" tainly entitled to my obedience. I
" therefore returned to Oxford, and
" threw myſelf into the boſom of the
" church, that he might have no cauſe
" of complaint, if I was happy enough-
" to meet him on any future occaſion.

" Soon after I had taken orders, I
" received the appointment which intro-
" duced me to the acquaintance of Mr.
" Weſtbury and his family, in conſe-

" quence of which I now have the ho-
" nour of being introduced to your La-
" dyſhip."

LADY CARY thanked him politely for the candour with which he gratified her curioſity. She confeſſed there was ſomething extremely ſingular and romantic in his ſituation, but that ſhe conceived the chances were equal, and therefore it was but fair to conclude, the ambiguity was as likely to clear up in his favour as to his diſadvantage.

HER Ladyſhip obligingly requeſted him to accept an apartment in her houſe, while it was convenient for him to reſide in London. Sir William pleaded a prior claim, but the idea of living in the ſame houſe with Miſs Weſtbury ſeconding her Ladyſhip's invitation, was too much for the feeble efforts of friendſhip, and Sir William was forced to ſubmit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

WHEN Harriet learned from her aunt,—Mr. Lewiſham was to dine with her, ſhe pretended indiſpoſition, and apologized for not leaving her apartment. The next day and the day following it was exactly the ſame, till lady Cary became ſeriouſly apprehenſive for her health. She conſulted her phyſician, he recommended air and exerciſe; but his advice and her ladyſhip's intreaty were equally ineffectual: Harriet was inflexible to both, and would leave her room on no pretence whatever.

The plea of indiſpoſition was admitted for ſeveral days, till it was no longer a plea, her health ſuffered in reality, and her appearance betrayed the ſlow progreſs of diſeaſe.

MR. LEWISHAM paſſed every hour in cruel ſuſpenſe. One moment, his affection magnified her complaints in the moſt alarm-

alarming manner; and the next, his impatience ſuggeſted it was nothing more than the pretence of lady Cary to keep her from his ſight.

HER Ladyſhip was no leſs divided in her conjectures; there was ſomething very extraordinary in the behaviour of Miſs Weſtbury, ſhe knew Mr. Lewiſham was in the houſe, yet ſhe never mentioned his name, nor made the leaſt enquiry any ways relating to him. She concluded at laſt it muſt be an effort of ſingular prudence, that Harriet, conſcious of the deep impreſſion Lewiſham had already made on her heart, was afraid to truſt herſelf in his preſence, while ſhe remained uncertain what might be the eventual turn of their acquaintance.

MR. LEWISHAM had been lady Cary's conſtant companion during Harriet's confinement, and his ſentiments, on every ſubject, religious, moral, and entertaining, were ſo expreſſive of rectitude and elegance,

elegance, that her ladyſhip was extremely delighted with his converſation.

FORTUNE certainly intended to make Mr. Lewiſham amends for ſome of the tricks ſhe had played him, by ſelecting ſo propitious a moment to bring him to the acquaintance of lady Cary. Sir William's exordium was freſh in her memory, and had prepared her to admire in him, what ſhe thought appertaining to another perſon. Harriet's unhappineſs in the morning had inclined her to wiſh for his appearance, and the diſtreſs from which he freed her in the evening brought him to her preſence powerfully recommended. She was prejudiced in his favour without knowing him, and could not recall her admiration, merely becauſe he was the object.

HER prejudice increaſed, as his mind opened to her view, and he had improved in her favourable opinion daily, till ſhe found he poſſeſſed as large a portion of her affection as eſteem; and now, conſidering

dering Harriet ſinking under the oppreſſion of a hopeleſs paſſion, ſhe reſolved to take an active part in the promotion of their mutual happineſs.

WITH this intention ſhe repaired to Miſs Weſtbury's chamber, and having expreſſed a very high ſenſe of Mr. Lewiſham's merit, ſhe began to communicate her deſign; but Harriet interrupted her, and earneſtly entreated her not to entertain any idea of the kind, aſſuring her, with an affected compoſure, while the tears ſtarted from her eyes, ſhe could not poſſibly oblige her more than never again to mention his name in her hearing.

A WEEK before ſuch a requeſt would have given her ladyſhip great ſatisfaction, but now ſhe was intereſted in the ſucceſs of her new favourite, and ſhe could not help telling Miſs Weſtbury ſhe was ſorry to ſee her capable of ſuch palpable inconſiſtency. "Is it," ſaid ſhe, "child, from motives "of contradiction, while I oppoſed your "attachment to this gentleman, from an "idea

" idea of its inequality, you would hear
" of nothing elſe? But now, when your
" obligations are conſiderably increaſed,
" and I from a conviction of his uncom-
" mon merit, had ſome thought of fa-
" vouring your happineſs, you deſire ne-
" ver to hear him mentioned. If this is not
" caprice, Harriet, be ſo obliging as
" to inform me what it is."

Miſs WESTBURY replied, greatly as her ladyſhip's unkindneſs diſtreſſed her, it did not ſurprize her in the leaſt. " I am
" too well acquainted," continued ſhe,
" with Mr. Lewiſham's capacity in the
" art of deceiving; but if his plauſibility
" can paſs on your ladyſhip's experience,
" ſurely ſome excuſe may be made for
" my credulity. If you will take the
" trouble of peruſing this letter, I flatter
" myſelf you will not think it ſo extraor-
" dinary, or ridiculous, that I ſhould
" wiſh to avoid all further acquaintance
" with the author of it.

" I AM

"I AM ſenſible how grateful I ought "to be for the very timely aſſiſt- "ance I received, but I ſincerely wiſh "Providence had effected it by the means "of ſome other perſon than the man I "have ſo much reaſon to deſpiſe.—I am "exceedingly mortified by the retroſpect "of my own fooliſh behaviour at the "time, but his unexpected appearance "threw me off my guard, and I was "weak enough to betray the pleaſure "I experienced; I forgot the cruel proof "I had received of his unworthineſs; "and while he called me his adored Har- "riet, I eagerly drank in the pleaſing po- "tion, nor turned a thought on the per- "nicious qualities of the intoxicating "draught. He knew, madam, how "tenderly my heart prided itſelf in a "partiality for what I thought his uncom- "mon virtues, but I was deceived; the "virtues I aſcribed to him could be no- "thing but the coinage of my diſordered "imagination."

LADY

LADY CARY, having read the letter two or three times with great attention, ſhe returned it with a ſmile, and declared herſelf firmly perſuaded the contents were without foundation, and that the whole was an impoſition calculated to anſwer ſome end in the grand ſcheme which had been carried on againſt her. "Your own "judgment, my dear," ſaid ſhe, "was "utterly blinded by prejudice when "you received it; a moment's reflection "muſt convince you of its improbability "at leaſt; for even if we admit, (which "in reality I can by no means do,) that "his heart was capable of yielding to "the conſiderations here ſet down, can "you poſſibly believe him capable of "making uſe of ſuch language for the "expoſition of his ſentiments? Beſides, "my dear, excluſive of circumſtantial "evidence, the matter of fact, related "by Sir William Burt, implies ſuch a "contradiction of principle, as could "never unite in the ſame perſon; nor do "I conceive the characters, in which this "letter is wrote, bear any great reſem-

"blance

" blance to Mr. Lewiſham's. It might " indeed paſs on a ſuperficial obſerver— " but, my dear girl, if you will take the " trouble of clearing the film from your " eyes, I apprehend you will diſcover a " material difference in this, and that " which you received at Bath."

HARRIET inſtanty began to examine them accurately and comparatively, and half convinced herſelf her aunt muſt be right; but when ſhe adverted to ſeveral circumſtances which ſhe conceived were known only to themſelves, her doubt again prevailed. " How is it poſſible, " my dear madam," ſaid ſhe, " that any " other perſon could mention the letter " wrote by me?"

LADY CARY replied, it was impoſſible for her to explain any thing of the kind circumſtantially, but that ſhe underſtood from Mr. Lewiſham he had wrote three letters; one immediately on the receipt of hers, and two from Oxford; and, as neither had been received by

by her, it was but reaſonable to conclude, either the captain or Mrs. Weſtbury had intercepted them, and from thence had obtained the neceſſary information.

HARRIET was ready enough to make excuſes for her lover, when her aunt had pointed out the way; there certainly was great probability in all ſhe had advanced in his favour, but then there remained a probability againſt him: and though ſhe ſincerely wiſhed to find him innocent, ſhe feared leſt her credulity ſhould again miſlead her.

SHE turned her ideas to a review of his paſt conduct. Nothing appeared againſt him on the tablet of her memory; all was fair, and honeſt: was it right then to condemn him for one myſterious inſtance, which could not be reduced to any kind of proof? Why ſhould he write her ſuch a letter, if the contents were true? What occaſion was there for her to be informed ſo? Was he not at liberty to act as he thought

thought proper? Why then ſhould he wantonly inſult her?

LADY CARY anſwered all her arguments, pro and con. in the beſt manner ſhe could; and reaſoning from probability and experience, ſhe was enabled to form a very juſt idea of what had really happened.

HARRIET now ſaw the matter in a very different light, but ſhe knew not how to act. Her lover muſt be abſolutely guilty, or abſolutely innocent, and of courſe muſt be wholly acquitted, or fully condemned: if guilty, he had ſunk himſelf beneath her conſideration, and could never do away the ſtigma from his character; but if innocent, ſhe had been too credulous, and certainly owed him ſome reparation for the uneaſineſs ſhe had occaſioned him, in conſequence of an opinion, equally injurious to his honour and his ſenſe.

She applied to her aunt for her advice in this important point, who gave it entirely in Mr. Lewiſham's favour, and Harriet's own heart warmly concurring with her ladyſhip's deciſion in behalf of her lover, the letter was given up, and Miſs Weſtbury accompanied lady Cary to the drawing-room, where her preſence filled the heart of Lewiſham with juſt that kind of ſenſation, which the Icelander feels on the firſt appearance of the returning ſun, after lying ſix months wrapt in the dreary ſhades of one continued night.

He had been in expectation of ſeeing her ſeveral preceding days, and had, as he conceived, prepared himſelf to meet her very properly; but his preparation did him little ſervice, for by the treachery of his memory, all his morſels of eloquence were forgot: juſt at the moment he wanted to make uſe of them, nature triumphed in his countenance, and his efforts to conceal the palpitation of his heart

heart were fruſtrated by the language of his eyes.

HARRIET bluſhed, played with her fan, and looked ſimple enough; and Lewiſham having paid her the compliment of the moſt awkward bow he ever made in his life, ſtammered out ſomething like, he hoped he had the honour of ſeeing her pretty well.

LADY CARY was particularly attentive to his preſent behaviour, and if ſhe before had entertained any doubts of his fidelity, they had now been entirely done away.—She ſaw him ſcarce able to ſupport the violent emotions of his throbbing breaſt—ſhe ſaw him gaze away his very ſoul, while he ſtood motionleſs, with pleaſure and admiration; and the exceſs of his affection was conſpicuous in the diſordered expreſſions in which he at laſt made the uſual enquiries after her health.

SHE

She was too good-natured to enjoy their confuſion, after ſhe had ſatisfied herſelf by her obſervation; ſhe therefore aſſumed an air, the beſt calculated to inſpire them with a proper degree of confidence in a ſituation the moſt painful to a delicate, ſuſceptible mind. She complimented Miſs Weſtbury on her having diſtinguiſhed real merit, under ſuch numerous diſadvantages; and ſhe complimented Mr. Lewiſham on his poſſeſſing merit ſufficient to juſtify her diſtinction. And having explained, as much as ſhe thought prudent, of her preſent deſigns, ſhe retired to dreſs, leaving her young friends at liberty to entertain each other.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

I HAVE before given my opinion, on the indecency of breaking in on thoſe kind of *têtes a tête*, and the little amuſement likely to ariſe from repeating the converſation of two perſons, who ſpeak of nothing, think of nothing, and ſee nothing but each other. In the preſent inſtance I make no doubt, ſhould I relate all the ſoft ſpeeches, ſo pleaſing and grateful to the ear of Miſs Weſtbury, though I make uſe of exactly the ſame terms, and placed in exactly the ſame order, yet, for want of his eyes, ſparkling with rapture and admiration, his voice ſoft, timid, tremulous—but half articulating, half formed ſentences—his ſmiles—his attitude.—In ſhort, for want of ſomething, infinitely beyond the power of deſcription, the whole would appear a lifeleſs, inſipid rhapſody of unconnected nonſenſe.

LADY

LADY CARY did not interrupt them, till the ringing of the dinner-bell warned her of the approaching hour; ſhe now regarded them with equal tenderneſs and attention, and found it impoſſible to decide in her own mind which poſſeſſed the largeſt portion of her tenderneſs.

THE tye of blood was in favour of Miſs Weſtbury, but the ambiguity of Lewiſham's ſituation intereſted her inſenſibly in his fate, and ſhe half perſwaded herſelf there would be infinite merit in forcing the goddeſs of fools to ſmile on a man of ſenſe.

THEIR reſtraint gradually wore off in a few days, and being now entirely freed from the apprehenſion and ſuſpence which had long preyed on their ſpirits, they appeared to Lady Cary in a very different light from what they had hitherto done; ſhe ſaw with real pleaſure the encreaſing ſtrength of their attachment, and looked forward to their union as an event

on which her happineſs was as much dependant as their's.

SIR WILLIAM BURT was their frequent viſitor, and as he entered fully into the ſpirit of every thing which related to his friend, he was conſulted on every occaſion.

IT was feared great difficulty would be met with in obtaining the conſent of Mr. Weſtbury, in favour of Mr. Lewiſham, as it was moſt likely Mrs. Weſtbury would exert all her influence to baffle their ſucceſs, as their intereſt was in every reſpect ſo diametrically oppoſite to hers. Sir William requeſted he might be employed on the occaſion, but with full power to negotiate as he ſhould think moſt proper when on the ſpot.

SIR WILLIAM had two reaſons for this requeſt, firſt, he believed Mrs. Weſtbury would be afraid to irritate a man who was ſo well acquainted with the dark ſhades of her character; and ſecondly, he

he believed the half of his fortune which Lewiſham had refuſed, might bear ſome weight with Mr. Weſtbury, if previouſly mentioned in ſupport of the merit of his friend. I cannot take upon me to ſay, if his ſucceſs would have anſwered his expectations, for an event entirely unlooked for, rendered his interpoſition unneceſſary.

They were ſtill converſing on the ſubject of their hopes and doubts, when a ſervant opened the door, and announced Mr. Weſtbury, and that gentleman immediately entered. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the various degrees of aſtoniſhment which appeared in every face; lady Cary roſe from her ſeat, but felt herſelf quite at a loſs how to addreſs him, while ſhe was ignorant whether his viſit portended war or peace; but my attention to the ſatisfaction of my readers being more prevalent than my politeneſs to her ladyſhip, I ſhall take the liberty of leaving her ſtanding whilſt I account for the appearance of Mr. Weſtbury, in

a place where I apprehend he was little expected, for which purpoſe I muſt take them back to the letter which he wrote lady Cary the day after Harriet's departure.

CHAP. XVII.

TO this letter Mr. Weſtbury received her ladyſhip's anſwer in the firſt warmth of his paſſion for the diſappointment of his deſigns, by the elopement of his daughter; he opened it in an inſtant, and perceiving ſhe made no attempt to diſguiſe her having received Miſs Weſtbury, he became more incenſed, and without peruſing the remainder of its contents, he yielded to an involuntary impulſe of rage, and threw it from him with an execration on female impertinence.

THE letter accidentally fell into a drawer which happened to ſtand open, containing papers of no conſequence, where it remained unperceived, and on the drawer being ſhut it was removed entirely from the ſight. When his reaſon began to recover a little from a paroxyſm of paſſion, he ordered it to be ſought for, but it was no where to be found, and after various fruitleſs attempts for its recovery, it was entirely given up, and very ſoon forgot.

HE concluded his daughter was never to be forgiven, becauſe ſhe had pretended to a will of her own, and if in ſpite of himſelf an idea of tenderneſs inſtinctively aroſe in his mind, he inſtantly oppoſed it by a ſtudied remembrance of her diſobedience, nor ſuffered one to eſcape from his thoughts, till the other withdrew.

BY this means prejudice preſerved the balance againſt her; and one fault was

made to out weigh all her goodneſs and all her virtues.

Mrs. Westbury conſidered this as a moment which it was her buſineſs to make the moſt of; ſhe ſaw the ſtruggle betwixt pride and nature, and did all ſhe conveniently could to ſupport the one, and ſuppreſs the other; ſhe redoubled her attention and aſſiduity, ſoothed his uneaſineſs one moment by ſoft blandiſhment and fond careſſes, the next endeavoured to divert it by the lively ſallies of her wit and vivacity; ſhe did not forget to continue her interceſſions in favour of Miſs Weſtbury, when ſhe perceived he was leaſt in a humour to hear of her, nor did ſhe forget to conclude all her interceſſions by gently touching on the enormity of ingratitude and diſobedience.

By this means ſhe never failed to wind up his reſentment to a degree of madneſs, till one day borne away by a ſudden guſt of paſſion, he gave orders, for

for excluding the preſumptuous girl, from a poſſibility of enjoying any part of his inheritance; and to inveſt irrevocably his beloved, his amiable conſort, with the whole of his poſſeſſions after his deceaſe.

THIS order Mrs. Weſtbury affected to treat as a jeſt, while ſhe ſecretly ſpared neither trouble nor expence to haſten the execution of the deed; ſhe appointed the hour for its being delivered to Mr. Weſtbury, and ſpent all the morning in coxing and flattering him into the diſpoſition moſt favourable to her purpoſe.

MR. WESTBURY had entirely forgot the whole affair, but what could he do? he picqued himſelf on the firmneſs, alias obſtinacy, of his temper, and made a point of never changing his opinion; beſide his wife was ſo exceedingly amiable, what could he do leſs; in a word he preſented the ſettlement to Mrs. Weſtbury, who declared ſhe would accept it on no conſideration, but as a proof of his friendſhip and

confidence; obſerving at the ſame time, Miſs Weſtbury ſhould find in her the parent ſhe had loſt in him. Mr. Weſtbury only requeſted he might never again hear her mentioned, and believing the gratitude and affection of his wife would be as unbounded as his liberality, he congratulated himſelf on the ſtep he had taken, and became more than ever devoted to the ſociety of his better half, conceiving her attention would conſole him for every diſappointment.

But alas! the ſtability of human happineſs is never to be depended on,—how fallacious were the conjectures of Mr. Weſtbury; and how very ſhort the duration of his bliſsful dream; the face of his affairs were ſoon changed wonderfully in their appearance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

MRS. WESTBURY's heart was unenlightened by the divine emanations of gratitude, and religion, and naturally deſtitute of every property of virtue; ſhe had hitherto acted with ſome attention to decorum, becauſe ſhe was ſenſible her intereſt demanded it; but that motive no longer exiſted; a lucky incident had ſecured her ſucceſs, beyond her moſt ſanguine expectation, and had ſet aſide the neceſſity of a reſtraint which ſhe had ſubmitted to, much againſt her inclination: why then ſhould ſhe continue a painful taxation on her complaiſance, when ſhe had no further end to anſwer by it?

HER huſband was no longer an object demanding any conſideration; he had made himſelf a bankrupt to raiſe her conſequence, and now whether he approved or diſliked the uſe ſhe made of his prodigal donation, was equally immaterial;

material; influenced by theſe maxims, ſhe reſolved to take a large revenge for all the precious moments ſhe had ſacrificed in order to accompliſh her favourite point, the maſk and domino was laid aſide at once; the tender obliging attentive wife, ſuddenly became a proud imperious ſelf-ſufficient miſtreſs, and began to lead the life ſhe had long wiſhed, without paying the leaſt attention to the preſervation of appearances, ſhe ſhone on every occaſion conſpicuouſly brilliant, and hurried indefatigably from place to place, to be followed, flattered, and admired: unreſtrained by the preſence of her huſband, ſhe ſuffered nothing elſe to reſtrain her, but indulged a levity in her behaviour which very ſoon procured her a large train of adorers, who were content to ſacrifice at the ſhrine of her vanity, in hopes of turning it to their own advantage.

THE Captain had likewiſe in a great meaſure withdrawn himſelf from Mr. Weſtbury's ſociety; Harriet's eſcape had ruined

ruined his hopes, and therefore not conceiving any immediate or conſequential advantage would ariſe from his continuing to impoſe on the credulity of that gentleman, he followed the example of his ſiſter, and left him to the full enjoyment of his own reflections.

Mr. Westbury was inexpreſſibly ſurpriſed by the unexpected behaviour of his wife and friend; he at firſt conſidered it merely as the whim of the day, not doubting but the next would replace his affairs in *ſtatu quo*, but he deceived himſelf, they grew rapidly from bad to worſe.

He at firſt tenderly lamented her abſence, and remonſtrated in the gentleſt terms, but was neither heard or attended to. Mrs. Weſtbury's engagements continually encreaſed, ſhe went out without apology, and returned without ceremony, nor concerned herſelf in the leaſt, what might be his opinion of her conduct.

Mr.

Mr. Westbury ſtill wiſhed to impoſe on himſelf, and made various excuſes for the ſingular behaviour of two perſons, who he had ever conſidered incapable of deviating in the leaſt, from an implicit complaiſance to the dictates of his will and pleaſure, but it was impoſſible to continue the deception, an unwillingneſs to acknowledge the error of his judgment, only prevented his forming a concluſion by no means to their advantage long before, but now being left entirely alone, his own thoughts intruded into his company, when he was leaſt in a humour to be entertained by them; he found his memory an unexpected ſource of mortification, which perpetually exhibited in his "mind's eye," ſome one or other of the many tranſactions of the four preceding months.

Reason, whoſe ſceptre had been uſurped by Mrs. Weſtbury on her firſt appearance at Bath, now took advantage of a favourable opportunity, and re-aſſumed her throne in ſpite of Mr. Weſtbury's efforts

ſorts to the contrary, who wiſhed to depoſe her entirely; as he dreaded being called to a ſevere account for the great devaſtation which he was conſcious had been practiſed during her abſence; in this ſituation he remained ſome time, harraſſed by mental anxiety, while his diſappointments were gathering ſtrength by the continual failure of his hopes.

CHAP. XIX.

HITHERTO his chains had only pinched a little, but Mrs Weſtbury was well inclined to tighten them every opportunity, ſhe did not content herſelf with the mortification her own behaviour was capable of giving him, but taught the leſſon to her ſervants; their maſter was to be nobody of himſelf, but was to riſe and fall in their eſtimation by the degrees of conſequence which ſhe thought proper

proper to give him, her documents were very well received by all her attendants except one, and he was refractory.

Mr. Westbury had a favourite domeſtic who had grown grey in the ſervice of himſelf and family; he was the foſter-brother of Mr. Weſtbury's mother, and to his diligence and attention, Mr. Weſtbury, when a boy ſtood indebted for many very ſerious obligations; his long and faithful ſervices had endeared him to his maſter, and he had ever been particularly eſteemed by the firſt Mrs. Weſtbury and Miſs Harriet; he was now paſt labour, and no longer capable of adminiſtering to the convenience of his benefactor; but Mr. Weſtbury treated him with the moſt humane indulgence, and rendered his exiſtence as eaſy and comfortable as poſſible, in return for the good he had done; his only buſineſs was to make his maſter's chocolate, and carry it to him at one o'clock, which he did as regularly as the hour came.

THIS poor worn-out creature, bending under the preſſure of accumulated years, had long been a great eye-ſore to Mrs. Weſtbury; ſhe was jealous of his attention to his maſter, to whom he was attached by gratitude and affection; many idle complaints had been preferred againſt him, but Mr. Weſtbury had reſolution enough to apologize for the unmeaning plainneſs of his old friend, without indulging her caprice at his expence.

THE caſe was now altered, the laws were to be of her own making, and the firſt ſtretch of her power marked him for its victim; one evening in Mr. Weſtbury's abſence, ſhe ordered him up behind her carriage; the poor wretch, who could ſcarce ſupport himſelf without the aſſiſtance of a crutch, was little able to obey her commands; but conſidering it merely as a jeſt on his infirmities, he replied, it was many years ſince he acted as lacquay to a fine lady.

MRS.

MRS. WESTBURY conſtrued this reply into a refuſal, and declaring the creature her bounty fed in lazineſs ſhould not inſult her with impunity, ſhe inſtantly diſmiſſed him, and notwithſtanding his apologies and entreaties, ſhe very fairly ſaw him turned out of doors.

THE next morning, Mr. Weſtbury not receiving his chocolate as uſual, enquired the cauſe, and was informed of what had paſſed; he was extremely ſurprized on the occaſion, and inſtantly ſent to Mrs. Weſtbury, deſiring to know why ſhe diſcharged his ſervant? She returned for anſwer, ſurely he did not ſuppoſe ſhe was to be accountable to him for diſmiſſing an inſolent domeſtic, whoſe impertinence he had encouraged. Mr. Weſtbury deſired to ſpeak with her immediately, but truly ſhe was dreſſing, and could not be interrupted; he ſent again, ſaying, he was ill, and ſhe muſt come to him, but ſhe deſired he would not trouble her, ſhe was dreſſing, and was going out, and could not poſſibly attend to him.

THIS

THIS anſwer, delivered verbatim by the meſſenger, had well nigh deprived Mr. Weſtbury of his ſenſes, he ſtarted wildly from his chair, then pauſing for a moment, "'Tis impoſſible," ſaid he, "ſhe dared not treat me ſo, tell your "miſtreſs to come to me this inſtant." But he received for anſwer, "Sir, my "miſtreſs is gone out."

HIS nerves, before in the moſt irritable ſtate, now trembled with the convulſions of rage, he had been uſed to implicit obedience, and now to be uſed in this manner was inſupportable; 'tis impoſſible to deſcribe the agony of his feelings, he traverſed his apartment with frantic impetuoſity, but finding himſelf unable to ſhake off the bitterneſs of his reflections, he called for his hat, and attempted to fly from himſelf.

HIS feet carried him imperceptibly towards the Park, he walked till his agitation abated, and he became ſomewhat more compoſed, and fatigued with the unuſual

unuſual exerciſe; he was returning up the Hay-Market, when a ſhower of rain obliged him to take ſhelter in George's coffee-houſe.

He had not ſat many minutes, when a gentleman entered, and enquired of a waiter if Captain Claverly was arrived.

He was anſwered in the negative, nor was he expected in town in leſs than a week

Mr. Weſtbury was ſurprized at the queſtion, but more ſo at the anſwer, and on the gentleman's ſeating himſelf near him, he, with great politeneſs, enquired how long Captain Claverly had been abſent?

The ſtranger replied he had been three years in Ireland with the regiment, and was now expected in town on the return of the troops.

Mr.

MR. WESTBURY enquired if Captain Cleverly of the —th regiment was the perſon he meant?

THE ſtranger replied in the affirmative.

MR. WESTBURY obſerved then, he believed he could give him better information than the waiter had given him, for that Captain Claverly had obtained leave of abſence ſeveral months before, and not only was in town at that inſtant, but had never left it for ſome time.

THE gentleman replied, Mr. Weſtbury muſt certainly be miſtaken, for that he had received letters from him but a few weeks before. Much more of the kind was advanced on both ſides, as they were equally obſtinate in defence of their opinions, till Mr. Weſtbury obſerved it was very improbable he ſhould be miſtaken in an inſtance of that kind, for he had very lately married Captain Claverly's ſiſter.

THE

THE ſtranger replied with a ſmile, he had met with a relation he very little expected then, for that he alſo had married a ſiſter of the captain, and yet he had never heard his having more than one, but this gentleman, continued he, turning to an officer who was juſt entering, bears a commiſſion in the ſame regiment, let him decide whether my brother is in England or not.

MR. WESTBURY aſſented, and the officer was applied to, who gave his fiat in the ſtranger's favour. Mr. Weſtbury gave up the argument to a majority of votes, though ſtill convinced he was right in his own mind.

CHAP. XX.

HE returned home, muſing on what had paſſed, and finding himſelf entirely alone, he went to his libra-

ry

ry with an intention of reading, but he took down a variety of books, juſt opened, and then replaced them, without being able to fix on any one promiſing the mental relief he ſtood ſo much in need of. He could not forget the coffee-houſe converſation, and made a number of judicious reflections on the impropriety of placing any confidence in the aſſertions of ſtrangers, however favourable their appearance, or plauſible their tale.

NOTHING is naturally ſo active as the mind; the ideas, when turned into any regular channel, purſue each other with aſtoniſhing facility, and retrace; in a few minutes every event of many preceding years.

MR. WESTBURY felt the force of this obſervation in a very diſagreeable way; he was enjoying a conſcious ſuperiority over his coffee-houſe companion, from a conviction that what he had there advanced was right, when it occurred to him there was a poſſibility that this very gentleman,

man, at that inſtant, might be indulging exactly the ſame ſatisfaction, and yet it was abſolutely impoſſible they could both be right: they had been equally poſitive in different facts relative to the ſame perſon, and had each advanced the ſame particular circumſtance, in confirmation of his reſpective opinion. It was very evident one of the accounts muſt be erroneous. Mr. Weſtbury was painfully convinced the circumſtances of the marriage relating to himſelf was true, and conceived his authority was ſatisfactory as to the fact, it tended to confirm; but when he recollected the ſtranger's *ipſe dixit* had been ſtrengthened by the waiter's reply, and the officer's teſtimony, he could not help acknowledging it was very extraordinary, and there certainly muſt be an appearance of probability in his favour at leaſt.

FINDING this reflection became more and more diſagreeable, he endeavoured to ſuppreſs it in favour of a new one; but the exchange

exchange was leſs ſalutary than he expected.

Mrs. WESTBURY's behaviour in the morning was next in his thoughts, and he could not reconcile himſelf to her uncommon inſolence. He had been extremely unwilling to open his eyes on the alteration of her conduct, but now ſhe had forced him to ſee it in ſpite of himſelf; he was full as ready to magnify her ſmalleſt faults, as he before was to contract the largeſt: he treated her with the epithets of ungrateful and perfidious, and vowed to baniſh her from his affection and his arms.

THIS idea growing as uneaſy as the laſt, he tried another and another, but without the deſired effect. His mind was fretted ſore, and all his application, being of a cauſtic nature, only tended to increaſe the irritation. However, the meaſure of his mortification was not yet compleat.

WHILE

WHILE he ſat induging his reveries, he reſted his elbow on a drawer of the book-caſe, which with the other hand by degrees he inſenſibly drew open, and perceiving a confuſed heap of papers, he took up ſeveral, and impelled by reſtleſneſs rather than curioſity, he examined their contents. Amongſt them was the letter of LADY CARY, which had lain dormant from the time he received it, ſeveral weeks before. This letter he now had patience to peruſe, and no language that I am acquainted with is ſufficiently forcible to convey any adequate idea of his ſituation when he had peruſed it. If he had read it at another time, it is poſſible he might have taken very little notice of it, but he was now properly prepared for myſterious information; he had already met with alarms, which had left his ſuſpicion awake; and he was really inclined to credit any thing to the diſadvantage of the parties concerned.

HAD Lady Cary told him his wife was an infamous woman, and her brother an impoſtor,

impoſtor, in direct terms, he would have laughed at the information as ridiculous, and of courſe would have diſbelieved it, from a natural averſion of ſubmitting to the opinion of another perſon; but her Ladyſhip had luckily wrote in a manner which flattered his ſelf-love: ſhe had juſt given him a clue, and left the deciſion to his penetration. If ſhe had made the diſpoſition of Mr. Weſtbury her particular ſtudy, ſhe could not have treated him more judiciouſly. He at firſt felt himſelf hurt by her cenſuring his behaviour to his daughter in ſuch very ſevere terms, but towards the concluſion ſhe conciliated his favour, by leaving a loop-hole for him to eſcape through, by placing his injuſtice to the account of his vile inſtigators.

Mr. Westbury had naturally a partiality for the marvellous and romantic. Lady Cary's account of herſelf pleaſed him, and that was ſufficient to juſtify every thing elſe ſhe had advanced.

THE concluſion of her letter produced a return of his delirium; the captain was not the perſon he pretended to be—why, he had been told the ſame thing in the morning, and he made no doubt but it was true; but then, who was he? and what was infinitely more conſequential to him, who was his ſiſter? that ſiſter who, in an evil hour, he had made his wife? if one was an impoſtor, what muſt the other be? He curſed the unlucky chance which brought them to his acquaintance, and blamed himſelf for the precipitation which had involved him in a ſeries of miſery and diſappointment; he perceived the complicated evils which hemmed him in on every ſide; and when he felt the impoſſibility of extricating himſelf from his preſent ſituation, he was ready to ſink under the mortifying reflection.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

MR. WESTBURY wanted ſtrength of mind to regulate the impetuoſity of his feelings. He was always the ſlave of ſome particular paſſion, which reigned for a time with the moſt arbitrary ſway; his tranſition, from one to another were as rapid as they were violent, and the new opinion was equally as prevailing as the laſt.

THE remembrance of his daughter's behaviour, contraſted with the late conduct of her mother-in-law, had given his heart many ſevere pangs; but his pride would not permit him to make the firſt advances towards a reconciliation. He conceived, by Lady Cary's letter, ſhe could explain all he deſired to know, and a ſincere wiſh to ſee Miſs Weſtbury ſeconding his curioſity, he determined to accept her Ladyſhip's invitation, and ſatisfy his mind at once. He did not wait a moment's conſideration, but roſe haſtily

from his chair, and departed for Harley-ſtreet, where his unexpected preſence threw the family into the ſurprize in which we left them, to account for his ſudden appearance.

He bowed to Lady Cary, and turning to Harriet, who ſtood motionleſs by her ſide, he exclaimed, "My child!" The tone of his voice, ſoftened to a degree of tenderneſs, was encouragement ſufficient for Miſs Weſtbury; ſhe flew to his arms, and their mutual feelings bid defiance to words.

Mr. Westbury apologized to Lady Cary, but ſhe politely requeſted he would make no excuſe for the indulgence of emotions which did honour to his heart; ſhe expreſſed herſelf particularly happy in ſeeing him at her houſe, introduced Sir William as an intimate friend, and led him to take notice of an old acquaintance in the perſon of Mr. Lewiſham.

Mr.

Mr. Westbury was charmed with the eaſy politeneſs of Lady Cary's behaviour. He paid a compliment to Sir William on the merit he muſt poſſeſs, to entitle him to her Ladyſhip's friendſhip; and he aſſured Mr. Lewiſham the pleaſure he at that moment enjoyed was ſenſibly animated by the preſence of a man, in whoſe ſociety he had paſſed ſo many hours of real ſatisfaction. He begged Lady Cary to favour him with a few minutes converſation, who accordingly requeſted her young friends would retire.

Mr. Westbury took Lady Cary's letter in his hand, and having explained, he lamented the accident which had kept him ſo long ignorant of its contents. "First," ſaid he, "I thank you, Madam, "ſincerely thank you, for ſhielding and "protecting my child, from the brutality "of her father, when in a moment of de-"lirium, deaf to the voice of nature, hu-"manity, and reaſon, he would have ſa-"crificed her to the avarice and ambi-"tion of a monſter. I am ſenſible I

" have acted imprudently; I am ſenſible
" I have acted madly, but I am, at pre-
" ſent, imperfectly acquainted with the
" nature of my ſituation. Your letter
" inclines me to believe you are miſtreſs
" of the ſubject; will you then have the
" goodneſs to free me from ſuſpence, by
" informing me of the full extent of my
" unhappineſs."

LADY CARY fearing to wound his ear by the ungrateful tale, replied in the moſt delicate and guarded terms, but he perceived it, and aſſured her, the caution was unneceſſary, that his infatuation was now over, and he was perfectly collected, and prepared to hear every thing ſhe could ſay, uninfluenced by hopes or fears.

THUS encouraged, ſhe proceeded to the unpleaſant taſk, and concealed no part of what concerned him; ſhe explained the original meanneſs of the captain, and the ſituation in which Mrs. Weſtbury had figured but a few months before, and having informed him of every thing

with

with which our readers are already acquainted: ſhe concluded with the captain's late outrage to Miſs Weſtbury, and the manner in which Mr. Lewiſham had been fortunately introduced to her knowledge in conſequence of it.

Mr. Westbury ſat ſilent with aſtoniſhment, greatly as their late behaviour had prejudiced him againſt them, he little expected to hear an account ſo truly infamous and deteſtable. Lady Cary perceived, and pitied the agony of his feelings, and attempted to ſooth him by obſervations on the aſcendancy of providence, and the inſufficiency of human foreſight, for diſcerning the tendency of events, which are rendered dark and impervious, by the ſhades which ſurround them.

Her ladyſhip won Mr. Weſtbury's heart in a few minutes; ſhe flattered the foible which had made him miſerable, but it was his foible ſtill; and he was ſtill to be governed by it.

Her conduct was in reality truly benevolent and humane; when the triumphant perſecutor of his child, ſhe deſpiſed him; but ſhe no ſooner beheld him ſmarting under the poignancy of remorſe, than ſhe inſtantly extended a friendly hand to raiſe him into conſequence with himſelf; ſhe preſſed him to ſtay dinner, and perceiving, notwithſtanding his affected tranquillity, his mind was really diſtreſſed and agitated, and ſuppoſing it to ariſe from the unpleaſant truths ſhe had related, ſhe exerted herſelf to alleviate the acuteneſs of his ſenſations. Her diſtinction was a cordial to his diſpoſition, and ſeverely as he was now ſuffering by the abuſe of his credulity, he was as ready as ever, to open his heart in confidence to a new friend.

He candidly informed her of the riſe and progreſs of his acquaintance with Captain Claverly and his ſiſter, the light they had at firſt appeared in, and the addreſs with which they had ſupported the character

character of ſincere diſintereſted friends; he explained as far as he had been able to penetrate, the various artifices which they had practiſed to blind his reaſon, and lead him ſtep by ſtep to the voluntary commiſſion of an action, which they dared not preſume to mention in direct terms: he omitted no circumſtance in his confeſſion, ſave and except the imprudent and irrevocable ſettlement which he had made Mrs. Weſtbury, and that was ſo full of criminal abſurdity, that mortified and humbled as he was, he could not bring himſelf to acknowledge it.

"You ſee" ſaid he, "Lady Cary, how "I am ſituated; I have ruſhed precipi- "tately into a wilderneſs in which I am "loſt; I entered by a plain flowery path, "but the ſcene is ſuddenly changed, "and I all at once find myſelf ſur- "rounded by thorns on every ſide: "will you Madam," continued he "will "you condeſcend to favour me with your "advice; I am ſenſible how very little

" I have deſerved the ſmalleſt inſtance " of your attention, but conſider me as " a credulous man, ruined by a miſtaken " principle of ill placed generoſity, and " in friendſhip to the amiable girl you " have honoured with your protection; " adviſe her father how to extricate him- " ſelf from the difficulties of his own " creation."

LADY CARY replied, his ſituation was indeed particularly embarraſſing, but that much better advice than hers was neceſſary to conduct an affair of ſo nice a nature; ſhe ſuppoſed, however he could have no idea of living with the woman whoſe artifice had betrayed him, and therefore the firſt ſtep was to get properly ſeparated from her, this was a point which demanded uncommon delicacy, and which ſhe conceived it would be expedient to effect by the gentleſt meaſures, for that every thing which tended to open the eyes of the world on her unworthineſs, would ultimately lead to reflections on his character. She declared herſelf

herſelf unable to render him the leaſt aſſiſtance, from her ignorance of the neceſſary proceedings, but that the gentleman he found with her in the morning ſhe imagined might be particularly ſerviceable on this occaſion, as he had known both the lady and the captain, and was likewiſe at preſent very intimate with Lord Bloomer: they continued a great while diſcuſſing various plans, the reſult of which was, that Sir William Burt ſhould be requeſted to undertake the conduct of an affair which demanded the moſt judicious management; they naturally concluded that Mrs. Weſtbury, when ſhe found her character detected, would be happy to accept of any accomodation rather than hazard the being expoſed by their reſentment, therefore they made no doubt but every thing would very ſoon be ſettled; in the mean time, Mr. Weſtbury was to make uſe of Lady Cary's houſe, while it was neceſſary for him to remain in London, and when the intended regulation was effected, her

lady ſhip

ladyſhip was to accompany his family into the country.

Mr. Westbury thanked Lady Cary in the moſt grateful terms for her benevolent attention to his eaſe and convenience, her offer was exactly what he moſt ardently wiſhed, as his own houſe was become odious to his memory, and he felt the ſevereſt repugnance at the idea of ever again beholding the woman who had ſo treacherouſly repaid his confidence.

CHAP. XXII.

IN the morning Sir William was applied to, and inveſted with full power to negotiate betwixt Mr. Weſtbury and his wife; he waited on the lady accordingly—She ſtarted involuntarily on his firſt appearance, but very ſoon got the better

better of her confuſion; he began to open his commiſſion, in terms perhaps rather expreſſive of the contempt which he felt, but ſhe interrupted him by aſking who he took her for, and with the moſt conſummate aſſurance, declared he muſt miſtake her for ſome other perſon, for that ſhe never recollected having had the honour of ſeeing him before, then drawing up her head, and aſſuming a look of immenſe importance, ſhe begged leave to inform him ſhe was Mr. Weſtbury's wife, and not conceiving he could be any ways concerned in her affairs, ſhe thought he would derive but little credit from taking advantage of her huſband's abſence to inſult her; for her part, as ſhe before obſerved, ſhe knew nothing of him, and from the nature of his language ſhe was inclined to believe he muſt be equally ignorant with reſpect to her, and therefore ſhe ſhould be obliged to him to make his viſit as ſhort as poſſible.

Sir William was abſolutely aſtoniſhed by her matchleſs effrontery, but he replied

plied with the utmoſt ſeverity, that ignorant as ſhe pretended to be, with reſpect to him, he was too well acquainted with her to be ſurprized at her preſent conduct. "I am very ſenſible you are Mr. Weſt-"bury's wife, but I am likewiſe ſenſible "of your infamy before, and your ini-"quity ſince you have been in that ſi-"tuation; I find, Madam," ſaid he, "it is neceſſary to ſpeak very plain, "and I am commiſſioned by Mr. Weſt-"bury ſo to do; your huſband has at "laſt opened his eyes on your conduct, "your artifice and perfidy are fully de-"tected, and at this moment, daring as "you are, the reſentment of a much in-"jured family is hanging over your "head, ready in an inſtant to reduce you "to nothing; conſiderations which relate "entirely to their own characters ſtay "their vengeance, and prevent their "expoſing you to the poverty and ſhame "which you ſo richly deſerve. Unworthy "woman! why were you not content "peaceably to enjoy your good fortune? "ſurely when you were ſecured from a

"life

" life of infamy, you might have looked
" up with gratitude to your benefac-
" tor, but you, with unparalleled baſe-
" neſs, when he had made you happy,
" induſtriouſly ſought to make him mi-
" ſerable, and wantonly ſtung him to
" the heart, while he was ſoftering you
" in his boſom; be aſſured your reign
" is now over, Mr. Weſtbury will ſee
" you no more, but while you preſerve
" your character from public calumny
" he will ſupport you more generouſly
" than you deſerve; I am to hear your
" terms, name them, but remember at
" the ſame time, you are to make me
" your friend or foe."

Mrs. Westbury laughed at his con-
cluſion, " I confeſs," ſaid ſhe, " that
" was a moſt excellent ſpeech, and you
" muſt confeſs I have heard it with an
" infinity of patience, but now you have
" delivered your meſſage, return to your
" politic employer, and tell him when
" he made you his errand boy, he did not

" inform

" inform you properly of the buſineſs
" you was going on; he muſt ſend to me
" in a very different ſtile before I ſhall
" liſten to him, and as for you I refuſe
" your favour, and deſpiſe your me-
" naces."

SIR WILLIAM attempted to reply, but ſhe aſſured him all he could ſay would anſwer no end, that he was entirely unacquainted with the cauſe he had taken in hand, for that neither Mr. Weſtbury's generoſity, or his friendſhip were objects of any conſequence to her, but that now as ſhe had indulged him ſo far with a patient hearing, ſhe begged he would depart, and leave her in peaceable poſſeſſion of her own houſe.

SIR WILLIAM returned, and informed them of the ill ſucceſs of his embaſſy; Lady Cary was ſurprized at the account, but more ſurprized to perceive Mr. Weſtbury expected it.—From this time that gentleman's unhappineſs ſeemed to encreaſe,

creaſe, ſomething evidently preyed on his mind, joy was a ſtranger to his heart, and all their attempts to relieve him were ineffectual.

CHAP. XXIII.

LADY CARY, amidſt all her diſappointments, never forgot the ſituation of her young friends, Mr. Lewiſham's merit was the continual ſubject of her converſation, but finding Mr. Weſtbury paid no attention to her indirect addreſs, ſhe determined to ſpeak more plain, and oblige him to anſwer her at once; her ladyſhip had two thouſand per annum, at her own diſpoſal, ſhe had ever deſigned it for Miſs Weſtbury, and thought ſhe could not employ it to better purpoſe than in making her happy; ſhe accordingly introduced the ſubject to Mr Weſtbury and having informed him of

of her ſentiment, and expatiated largely on the numerous good qualities of Mr. Lewiſham, ſhe concluded with obſerving, if he would conſider Miſs Weſtbury properly with reſpect to fortune, ſhe would be anſwerable for two thouſand a year on the part of Mr. Lewiſham.

Mr. Westbury ſtarted at the propoſal, "My God," ſaid he, "Madam, "you will drive me to diſtraction," and claſping his hands in an agony, he exclaimed, "Oh, Lady Cary!" but the violence of his emotions deprived him of ſpeech, and he remained ſilent, in an attitude of deſpair.

Lady Cary was ſurpriſed and terrified by his unaccountable behaviour, which was not leſſened when in a moment after he approached her with a hurrying earneſtneſs in his countenance, and in the moſt pity-moving accents, continued, "Madam I have abuſed your friend-"ſhip, I have deceived you, and I would "willingly deceive myſelf; but I find "it

" it is impoſſible. Mr. Lewiſham de-
" ſerves every thing, I am not inſenſible
" of his merit, but it is no longer in my
" power to reward it; I have ruined my-
" ſelf, Madam, and I have ruined my fa-
" mily, I have ſacrificed my fortune to an
" imaginary deity, and have enriched an
" impoſtor with the ſpoils of my child."
He then informed her fully of the exceſſive imprudence he had been guilty of with reſpect to the ſettlement, and concluded with requeſting ſhe would deſpiſe him for his weakneſs, but not deteſt him for his cruelty.

LADY CARY's amazement and vexation was indeſcribable, " Mr. Weſtbury," ſaid ſhe, " is it poſſible?" But directing her eyes towards him, his mortified and humble appearance inſtantly diſarmed her reſentment, and the ſentence of reproach died imperfect on her tongue; he took from her the power of upbraiding, by the ſeverity of his own remorſe; his infatuation had been unprecedented, but ſhe ſaw his diſtreſs was the ſame, and her humanity

humanity pitied, while her reaſon condemned him.

LADY CARY was now more at a loſs how to act than ever, the inſolence of Mrs. Weſtbury's behaviour was fully accounted for, how ridiculous was the idea of propoſing terms to a woman who had every thing in her own hands already. Mr. Weſtbury's life was not even a temporary obſtacle to her, as the reverſion of his fortune was ſecurity ſufficient for her obtaining any immediate ſums on, he was in fact nothing more than her tenant for life, and if ſhe could ſhorten his exiſtence by making him miſerable, ſo much the better, as the incumbrance would then be at an end.

SIR WILLIAM was again applied to, and requeſted to conſult the ſages of the law on the validity of the ſettlement, and the poſſibility of their deriving any benefit from legal interpoſition, but the anſwer he received was by no means ſatisfactory, the proceſs would be tedious and expen-

expenſive, the event doubtful, if he could compromiſe the matter on any terms, they by all means adviſed him to do it.

LADY CARY's embarraſſment was inexpreſſible, ſhe was extremely unwilling to make the affairs of her family the ſubject of public converſation, but ſhe perceived it would be unavoidable, it was abſurd to ſuppoſe Mrs. Weſtbury would quietly reſign any part of her fraudulent acquiſitions, all her hopes, therefore, depended on being able to ſet aſide the deed.

IN the mean time, Mrs. Weſtbury was living away in the moſt brilliant and extravagant ſtile, the captain was her conſtant companion, and could any odium poſſibly be thrown on the conduct of a woman who never appeared but under the protection of her brother, ſuch he was conſidered in the world, a few individuals only knew to the contrary, who wiſhed to conceal it in tenderneſs to themſelves.

Mrs. Westbury and the captain were ſenſible of this, and from thence were encouraged to triumph maliciouſly in their iniquity; they braved the reſentment of the much-injured family, and conceiving themſelves ſheltered within the letter of the law, they laughed at the idea of equity and right. They had the audacity to draw on Mr. Weſtbury for the moſt exorbitant ſums, and ſent their bills for him to diſcharge.

Lady Cary was obliged to anſwer all their demands herſelf, not daring to make Mr. Weſtbury acquainted with their inſolence. His melancholy was already increaſing daily, and he appeared evidently ſinking under the oppreſſion of grief and diſappointment. Nothing amuſed, nothing gave him pleaſure; his daughter's attention made him uneaſy, conſcious he had not deſerved it; and her preſence became unſupportable from his lively ſenſe of the injury he had done her. He frequently gazed on her, till tears of tenderneſs dimmed his eyes, and then

then haſtily retired to conceal the anguiſh of his ſoul. The only conſolation he experienced was in the ſociety of Lady Cary; his miſery ſeemed for a while ſuſpended when ſhe ſpoke, and ſhe could ſooth his mind to a momentary peace.

Lady Cary had informed Harriet and Lewiſham of the imprudent ſtep Mr. Weſtbury had taken, and the little probability there was of ſetting aſide Mrs. Weſtbury's claim. Harriet made no reply, filial piety ſealed her lips, but Lewiſham looked up with tranſport; he lamented his unhappineſs that the circumſtance which filled his breaſt with unutterable joy ſhould be a ſubject of uneaſineſs to her Ladyſhip, but that he was now able to lift his hopes to the poſſeſſion of a treaſure which, till that moment, he had deſpaired of. He kneeled at Lady Cary's feet, and earneſtly conjured her to be propitious to his wiſhes; her Ladyſhip was the ſole arbitreſs of his fate, and one word of hers could raiſe him to happineſs moſt exquiſite, or ſink him

him to inexpreſſible deſpair.——The friendſhip of Sir William Burt had enabled him to offer a moderate competence to the woman he adored, would ſhe then generouſly incline his charming Harriet to accept it? He knew the preſumption of his requeſt, but did the man exiſt who could aſpire to Miſs Weſtbury, without preſuming? Her Ladyſhip had flattered him with her eſteem; if ſhe would favour him in this inſtance, his felicity would be compleat. He was ſenſible he could plead no pretenſions to her indulgence, but the fault was not his; had the whole world been in his poſſeſſion, Miſs Weſtbury ſhould have been queen of the univerſe; as it was, the devotion of an ardent faithful heart was all he had to offer, and that was moſt ſincerely hers.

Lady Cary was ſilent and irreſolute; ſhe knew not what to reply, every recommendation which depended on himſelf, all that could be required was Lewiſham's. Nature had likewiſe been kind to him; his

his perſon was faultleſs; the caſket was amiable, the jewels it contained as ineſtimable. All that he wanted were accidental diſtinctions, which were frequently worn by the moſt worthleſs part of the creation. Harriet's bluſhes expreſſed her ſentiments; her heart aſſented to her lover's intreaty, though ſhe dared not lift her eyes from the ground. Lady Cary loved them both, their happineſs was equally dear to her, and they regarded her as the perſon on whom it depended. When ſhe looked grave, their countenance caught the infection; when ſhe ſmiled, joy ſparkled in their eyes. Theſe reflections determined her; ſhe took a hand of each, and led them to Mr. Weſtbury.

He was ſilent, Lady Cary pleaded warmly in their favour, till at laſt Mr. Weſtbury replied, "My dear Madam, "do not increaſe my diſtreſs; you ſee al-"ready a proud man humbled to the duſt; "ſpare me then the confuſion of giving "my child a beggar to the arms of a

" worthy man. If your Ladyſhip's ef-
" forts are ſucceſsful in recovering any part
" of the fortune I have ſo profuſely ſquan-
" dered, it will be hers. Diſpoſe of her
" then agreeable to the dictates of your
" own heart; but ſpare me, at preſent,
" my feelings are inſupportable."

LADY CARY ſaid no more. Sincerely as ſhe wiſhed the happineſs of her favourites, ſhe could not urge a ſubject ſo painful to his ear.

ALL their hopes were nearly at an end, for the circumſtance on which Mr. Weſtbury's approbation depended was likely never to take place. Mrs. Weſtbury would hear of no terms; ſhe inſiſted on two thouſand a year for her ſeparate maintenance during Mr. Weſtbury's life, and on the full force of her ſettlement after his deceaſe. Their council gave them very little encouragement to hope any ſatisfaction would ariſe from the termination of their ſuit. In a word, we believe no family were ever more completely wretched; when fortune, ſeemingly

ingly weary with perſecuting them, began to relax a little of her ſeverity, and amuſed them with an incident as pleaſing as unexpected.

CHAP. XXIV.

WHILE they were at breakfaſt the following day, a card was brought to Lady Cary, containing Lord Cary's compliments; that he had arrived in London late the evening before; and that, if it was convenient to her Ladyſhip, he ſhould be happy to pay his reſpects to her immediately, as he was extremely impatient to have that honour.

LADY CARY'S anſwer expreſſed her wiſhes to ſee him as ſoon as poſſible, and in half an hour he made his appearance. When Lord Cary entered the drawing-room, her Ladyſhip was ſitting with Har-

riet and Lewiſham. They roſe to receive him; he addreſſed himſelf to Lady Cary, but before the uſual compliments were finiſhed, he perceived Mr. Lewiſham, who was advancing towards him. He appeared pleaſed and ſurprized, and inſtantly quitting her Ladyſhip, he took his hand with an air of benevolence and affection, "My dear Edward," ſaid he, "I am inexpreſſibly happy to ſee "you; I flattered myſelf with the plea- "ſure of perſonally introducing you to "the acquaintance of this Lady, but the "goodneſs of her heart has anticipated "my deſign, and I doubt not but your "merit will render my recommendation "unneceſſary. If it were poſſible, ma- "dam, continued he to Lady Cary, for "my veneration for your Ladyſhip to "increaſe, after what I have already "heard of your character, your friendſhip "to this youth would moſt certainly "produce a very conſiderable addition; "but I dare not expreſs my ſentiments, "as I am conſcious your delicacy would "be too much hurt to hear me admire as a "phæno-

" phænomenon what is but the natural " effect of your truly generous heart."

THIS compliment was perfectly unintelligible to both her Ladyſhip and Lewiſham, he was ſilent, but Lady Cary acknowledged herſelf ſenſible of his politeneſs, and obſerved it was very extraordinary Mr. Lewiſham had never informed her that he had the honour of being known to Lord Cary.

LORD CARY's countenance underwent a very evident change by her anſwer, and his ſurprize communicated itſelf to both their faces, though they knew not from whence it proceeded; " Lewiſham!" ſaid his Lordſhip, with a tone of diſſatisfaction, " Why, Madam, do you call " him Lewiſham? Surely Lady Cary " cannot object to a young man's bearing " the name of his family, unleſs his con- " duct has rendered him a diſgrace " to it."

LADY CARY's aſtoniſhment was exceedingly increaſed by an addreſs ſo incomprehenſible, delivered in accents of reproach, but Mr. Lewiſham was too much intereſted to let it eſcape his attention, "My father," ſaid he, "or "rather Mr. Lewiſham, in his laſt mo"ment, informed me I was not his ſon, "but the hand of death ſealed his lips "for ever before he could finiſh the ſen"tence, or inform me whoſe ſon I was." He then related the particulars of Mr. Lewiſham's ſudden diſſolution, and continued, "You, Sir, I hope, will clear "up an uncertainty which has given me "the greateſt unhappineſs. This, my "dear Madam," ſaid he to Lady Cary, "is the gentleman you heard me menti"tion as the friend of my father, whom I "ſo much wiſhed to ſee."

IT is abſolutely impoſſible to convey any adequate idea of the aſtoniſhment which every countenance now expreſſed, they looked alternately at each other, and waited with equal impatience for the expla-

explanation of circumſtances, which at preſent were equally myſterious and unaccountable.

THE diſagreeable ſilence was at length interrupted by Lord Cary's enquiring how Mr. Lewiſham had been introduced to her ladyſhip? If ſhe knew him by no other name?

LADY CARY replied, Mr. Lewiſham's introduction had been merely accidental, and accordingly related the circumſtances of his meeting with Miſs Weſtbury.

LORD CARY ſmiled with pleaſure inexpreſſible, at the concluſion of the little narrative, "How exceedingly romantic," ſaid he, "this ſtory appears, and what a "Comedy of Errors has the ſudden death "of my valuable friend involved us in, "but it remains with me to clear up the "myſtery: If this gentleman," continued he to Lady Cary, "has been able "to conciliate your eſteem as Mr. Lew-"iſham only, when you ſhall know him

" as Mr. Bland, I am convinced your " eſteem will increaſe; this, my dear " madam, is Edward Bland! The Ed- " ward Bland, who was the ſubject of " your enquiry in the letters I had the ho- " nour of receiving. I left Italy for the " expreſs purpoſe of introducing him to " your friendſhip; his mother, with her " laſt breath, recommended him to " your affection, and I promiſed her " I would uſe my intereſt in his favour; " let me then, madam, faithfully diſ- " charge my truſt by preſenting him to " you, and if he ſtands in need of any " further recommendation than your ac- " quaintance with him has already fur- " niſhed you with, accept my teſtimony " in ſupport of his merit."

COLD and inanimate would be my attempt to paint the feelings of Lady Cary, ſhe ſilently, and fervently claſped her hands, and was advancing to receive him with open arms, but a riſing doubt checked the free indulgence of her emotions, ſhe ſuddenly ſtopped and ſurveyed his face

face with a ſcrutinizing eye, as if ſhe was ſeeking to trace in his countenance the confirmation of her hopes, unable to convince herſelf of the truth, on an aſſertion ſo incredible by this means; ſhe again applied to Lord Cary, and begged he would inſtantly ſatisfy her mind, by explaining the various ſteps which had rendered this event ſo ſeemingly doubtful and ambiguous.

Lord Cary replied, he was happy he had it in his power to anſwer her enquiries ſo fully, for though now a concurrence of circumſtances appeared ſo very myſterious, they had at firſt taken their riſe from the mereſt trifles imaginable.

CHAP. XXV.

"SOMETIME," ſaid his Lordſhip, "prior to the death of the old "Lord Cary, my brother was obliged to "go to Ireland, in conſequence of a lit-"tle eſtate which had been left him in "that kingdom; Mr. Lewiſham, the "gentleman your ladyſhip has heard ſo "frequently mentioned, had been our "preceptor, the guide of our earlieſt days. "Our father had left him independent "by an annuity for his life; but he was "a worthy man! I loved and revered "him, and I preſſed him to oblige me "by continuing in my houſe; when my "brother departed for Ireland, he re-"queſted Mr. Lewiſham to take charge "of his affairs, deſiring he would open "all letters directed to him for the pur-"poſe of forwarding ſuch as were of "importance.

"HE came to me one morning with a "letter in his hand, addreſſed to my "brother,

" brother, which he had opened in the
" execution of his commiſſion, and which
" he earneſtly requeſted me to read, it
" was ſigned Charlotte Leigh, and con-
" tained a moſt affecting picture of ten-
" derneſs and remorſe; ſhe complained
" of his ſilence and neglect, and begged
" him to come to her immediately, that
" ſhe was extremely ill with a fever,
" which her phyſician declared to be
" the fore-runner of the ſmall-pox, that
" God only knew what would be the
" conſequence, but her mind was greatly
" diſtreſſed, and overwhelmed by anti-
" cipated horrors, that in a moment ſo
" dreadful, ſhe had no attentive hand to
" raiſe her drooping head, nor friendly
" voice to chear her with the ſoft ſound
" of conſolation, but that poignant as
" her own miſery was, it was but ſe-
" condary, her ſweet boy was uppermoſt
" in her thoughts, and ſhe conjured him
" by the tendereſt epithets, to come and
" receive him from his mother's arms,
" and preſerve him if poſſible from ſhar-
" ing her fate, ſhould the hand of Hea-
" ven

" ven puniſh her in its wrath, for her
" paſt folly and ingratitude.

" I IMMEDIATELY requeſted my friend
" to viſit this afflicted fair one, and ſee if
" any thing could be done to yield her the
" leaſt aſſiſtance. He very ſoon returned,
" and deſcribed a ſcene of woe which
" made my heart bleed. I went to ſee
" her myſelf, and found her delirious;
" ſhe miſtook me for my brother, and
" expreſſed the moſt lively joy at ſeeing
" me; ſhe ſpoke of nothing but her
" dear boy, and unconnected as her ſenſes
" were in every other reſpect, nature pre-
" vailed in this, and the mother's fond-
" neſs ſurvived the loſs of reaſon.

" I SENT for my own phyſician, he
" gave me not the ſmalleſt hopes of her
" recovery, but promiſed to leave nothing
" undone, which could poſſibly afford her
" the ſmalleſt relief.

" WHEN I left her apartment, I enquir-
" ed for the child, and I think I never be-
" held

" held a more beautiful boy. He ran to
" me with the ſweeteſt confidence, and
" his innocent prattle engaged my heart
" inſenſibly in his favour; the virulent
" infection had mixed with the lovely
" fellow's blood, but he had the diſeaſe in
" the moſt favourable manner, while his
" mother daily grew worſe and worſe;
" eight days her fever raged with the wild-
" eſt fury, but as nature became exhauſt-
" ed, ſhe grew more compoſed, and on
" the ninth day her delirium left her, and
" ſhe was reſtored to a ſenſe of her
" wretched ſituation.

" HER nurſe had informed her of my
" attention: She thanked me with tears
" of unfeigned gratitude, and feeling
" herſelf rapidly verging towards eterni-
" ty, ſhe entreated me to take charge
" of her dear child, and to uſe my in-
" tereſt in recommending him to your
" ladyſhip's favour, ſhe informed me of
" her firſt acquaintance with you, and
" mentioned your friendſhip and gene-
" roſity in the warmeſt terms, and ſin-

" cerely

" cerely lamented the ingratitude and " imprudence of her behaviour. I will " not diſtreſs your ladyſhip by dwelling " on a ſcene, the bare remembrance of " which ſtill chills me with horror; on " the eleventh day the hand of death " ended her miſery.

" I TOOK the child to my own houſe " immediately, and left my friend to per- " form the laſt offices for the unfortunate " Charlotte, whoſe fall from virtue was " ſo ſeverely puniſhed by a life of anxiety " and remorſe.

LADY CARY's tears flowed plentifully to the memory of her imprudent friend; her faults had been few, and her ladyſhip conceived they had been more than expiated by the acuteneſs of her diſtreſs.

LORD CARY proceeded, " I immedi- " ately enquired after your Ladyſhip, " where Charlotte had directed me, but " was informed you had retired into the " country ſome time before, and I found

" it

" it impoſſible to gain the leaſt ſatisfac-
" tory intelligence as to the place of
" your retirement. My brother's ſtay
" in Ireland was likewiſe lengthened
" much beyond what I had expected; ſo
" that I felt myſelf greatly at a loſs how
" to diſpoſe of my charge with propriety.
" His continuing in my houſe was ex-
" tremely ineligible for many reaſons; in
" the firſt place, he would depend too
" much on the care of ſervants; and I
" conceived the appearance of ſuch a
" boy in the family of a young man of
" faſhion, would afford a ſubject of con-
" verſation prodigiouſly grateful to the
" diſpoſitions of the idle and cenſorious
" part of the world.

" I CONSULTED my friend on this head,
" who readily agreed with me in the ne-
" ceſſity of removing him, till my bro-
" ther returned, or I could obtain ſome
" information concerning your ladyſhip,
" and he accordingly made the neceſſary
" enquiry after a proper ſituation.

" The

" THE miſtreſs of a little ſchool in a " healthy village, but a few miles from " London, was ſtrongly recommended for " her care and attention to children, this " was at preſent the object of moſt con- " ſequence to us, as the little fellow was " too young to receive any material be- " nefit as to education; Mr. Lewiſham " by being much more at home than " myſelf, ſtood infinitely higher in Ed- " ward's favour, he always called him " his dear Papa, and the tenderneſs of " my friend's behaviour in return was " exceedingly well calculated to con- " firm the conjecture which it was likely " might ariſe in conſequence of it; as " the little fellow grew older, their mu- " tual partiality ſeemed to increaſe, and " Mr. Lewiſham earneſtly requeſted that " the name which had firſt been given " him by accident, might now be con- " tinued by deſign, proteſting he was ſo " much endeared to him by his amiable " and affectionate behaviour, that he " dared not riſk the loſs of it by inform- " ing him of his real ſituation.

" WHEN

"WHEN my brother returned, I enquired very particularly after your ladyſhip, but I dare not repeat his replies, 'tis ſufficient to ſay he evaded my queſtions, nor could I ever induce him to give me the leaſt ſatisfaction as to the place of your reſidence. I informed him of the circumſtances of Charlotte's death, and where I had placed his ſon, he profeſſed himſelf perfectly ſatisfied with what I had done, but declined the ſubject, nor ever after paid him the leaſt attention. Edward was now left wholly to the care of Lewiſham, who felt the ſincereſt affection for his nominal ſon, he was continually telling me of his improvement, and he repeated every word or action which he thought pertinent or meritorious, with all the enthuſiaſm of the moſt partial father.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

"MR. LEWISHAM had not en-
" joyed a good ſtate of health
" for ſome time, and my phyſician adviſ-
" ed him to ſettle in the country; I ac-
" cordingly took him a little houſe at
" Windſor, and he earneſtly requeſted I
" would permit him to take his ſon with
" him; he was immediately removed to
" Eaton, and from thence to Oxford; I
" ſaw him ſeveral times, and was conti-
" nually receiving the moſt flattering ac-
" counts of him; whether he deſerved
" them or not, your ladyſhip muſt now
" be a very competent judge."

LADY CARY no longer doubted the verity of Lord Cary's information; ſhe received Mr. Lewiſham with the moſt flattering diſtinction, and embraced him with unfeigned tranſport; ſhe expreſſed the ſincereſt joy that fortune had at length done juſtice to his merit, and declared ſhe would not reſign the hope of very ſoon

ſoon ſeeing him as happy as he deſerved to be.

MR. LEWISHAM, for ſuch, to avoid confuſion, we ſhall continue to call him, did not enter into the ſpirit of her ladyſhip's ſatisfaction in the manner ſhe expected; the account which ſhe had juſt heard, alternately pleaſed, diſtreſſed, elevated, and humbled him; there was nothing with which he could reproach himſelf, in the errors of his birth, but his ſenſibility was hurt, and he bluſhed that the authors of his exiſtence were ſo little to be reſpected.

LADY CARY obſerved, and pitied his feelings, and endeavoured to relieve him by giving the converſation a different turn, but for the preſent ſhe found it impoſſible; many circumſtances yet remaining to be explained:—Mr. Lewiſham had been able to gain but a very imperfect knowledge of his own hiſtory from Lord Cary's information, and unpleaſant as that information was, he could not ſuppreſs

preſs a deſire of being made more particularly acquainted with a ſubject which ſo materially concerned himſelf.

LADY CARY anſwered all his enquiries in the tendereſt manner poſſible, and where a neceſſary explanation of facts obliged her to touch on the leaſt amiable parts of his parents conduct, ſhe did it with the moſt conſiderate delicacy; but when ſhe came to mention his preſent ſituation, ſhe expatiated on it with inexpreſſible delight, and congratulated him on his acceſſion to independence, with the warmth and ſincerity, which a mind, friendly and benevolent as her own, could only feel.

LEWISHAM diſcerned the generous motives of her caution, and his heart, gratefully ſenſible of her indulgence, thanked her in ſilence; Lord Cary now only remained to be informed more particularly of his friend's death, and Lewiſham repeated what he had before related to Lady Cary.

MISS WESTBURY had hitherto ſat a ſilent, but by no means an unintereſted auditreſs of this converſation; the emotions of her gentle boſom had varied with the hiſtory of her lover; a ſmile of gladneſs had diffuſed itſelf on her countenance at every pleaſing occurrence, and her heart beat ſadly reſponſive to every melancholy circumſtance.

LADY CARY now introduced her to his lordſhip, and very ſoon after took an opportunity to inform him of her acquaintance with, and obligation to, Mr. Lewiſham, and the mutual attachment which had long ſubſiſted between them; ſhe candidly acknowledged how much her own opinion had left her to favour them, repeated the offers ſhe had made, and lamented the unhappy effects of Mr. Weſtbury's infatuation, which ſhe feared would prove an unſurmountable obſtacle to their union during his life.

LORD CARY was in raptures with this account of his nephew, whoſe whole con-

conduct had been ſo rationally, though not romantically perfect; his Lordſhip found few occaſions of blame, but many of praiſe, and he did not withhold the encomiums which he thought were ſo juſtly deſerved. Nor could his lordſhip ſufficiently expreſs his approbation of the propriety and rectitude of Miſs Weſtbury's behaviour, he extolled the charms of her mind in terms of enthuſiaſm, and contemplated the beauty of her perſon with equal admiration; he affectionately congratulated Mr. Lewiſham, that he had ſo honourably conciliated the eſteem of a woman who would at once enſure his felicity, and dignify his choice; his lordſhip thanked Lady Cary for the generous part ſhe had taken in favour of the amiable pair, and joined with her in regretting the accident which impeded the completion of their union; but that nothing might be left undone, which might forward an event ſo univerſally deſired, they agreed to attack Mr. Weſtbury in a party; that they ſhould inform him of Mr. Lewiſham's acquiſition

tion of fortune and independence, and that all their rhetoric ſhould be united to combat his miſtaken principle, if he perſiſted in a negative, in defence of which no one good reaſon could be advanced.

THEY tried the experiment, but their eloquence was ineffectual; neither arguments, nor entreaty procured the leaſt conceſſion; Mr. Weſtbury's pride and obſtinacy had increaſed in proportion to his mortification, and his former objections were increaſed by his idea of Mr. Lewiſham's encreaſe of conſequence; he returned his former anſwer, that he could not conſent to receive an obligation, nor give his daughter while deſtitute of fortune, and he earneſtly requeſted he might be ſpared all farther application, until his affairs were reduced to ſome kind of certainty.

MR. LEWISHAM'S diſappointment was nearly inſupportable, the cup of happineſs had been unexpectedly preſented to him, but while his delighted ſoul was

in

in a flutter to anticipate his joy, while every faculty was collecting and expanding itſelf for the reception of the divine infuſion, an invidious hand ſuddenly interfered, and daſhed it from his half open lips; his impatience ſometimes ſtruggled with his reſpect, but by the judicious advice of Lady Cary, he conducted himſelf with tolerable compoſure, though anxiety and ſuſpence preyed on his heart.

Lady Cary had a moſt painful taſk in dividing her attention amongſt her friends, in every one of whoſe unhappineſs ſhe ſympathized, and to every one of whom ſhe was equally deſirous of adminiſtering conſolation; ſhe ſaw Mr. Weſtbury rapidly ſinking under the oppreſſion of ſelf-created miſery, and ſhe ſaw Harriet's bloom daily withering by the chilling blights of hopeleſs love; to the one her ladyſhip ſpoke in favour of patience, and to the other ſhe recommended duty and reſignation; her doctrine was heard, and allowed to be juſt, but they were only ſuperficial converts.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

ABOUT a month had paſſed in the moſt painful inquietude without any thing occurring which could flatter them with more pleaſing proſpects; when one morning Mr. Lewiſham accompanied his uncle and Sir William Burt to Kenſington Gardens, where they met Mrs. Weſtbury, and Sir William pointed her out to his friend as the ſource of his preſent unhappineſs.

AN involuntary curſe eſcaped from Lewiſham's lips at the mention of her name, and he turned from her indignantly, till a deſire to ſee in what ſhape the dark fiend appeared, got the better of his reſentment, and drew his eyes towards her in ſpite of himſelf; when he inſtantly made a full ſtop, and obſerved the lady with fixed attention; he turned as ſhe paſſed, and followed her with his eye till the meandering of the walk ſecluded her from his view, and then remained in the

ſame attitude, intently muſing, and ſeemingly involved in a maze of imperfect recollection; at length he ſtarted from his reverie, and exclaimed, "My God! it muſt "be the ſame! What a ſcene of myſte-"rious villainy, my friend," ſaid he to Sir William, haſtily catching him by the arm, "Is that really Mrs. Weſtbury?" Sir William replied in the affirmative, "And you are ſure," continued Lewiſham, "that her name was Baily, and "that the man who brutally inſulted "Miſs Weſtbury now paſſes for her bro-"ther, and his name is Claverly?" Sir William replied, that was exactly the caſe! "Well, then, my friend," ſaid Lewiſham, "I hope heaven has only "permitted ſucceſs ſo far to crown their "iniquitous proceedings, that their fall "may ſtrike them the more ſeverely, and "diſappointment overwhelm them, when "they leaſt expect it.

SIR WILLIAM replied, he hoped the ſame, but his fear of the contrary was at preſent more prevailing; Lewiſham ſaid no

no more, and they ſoon after returned home, where the alteration of his appearance did not eſcape Lady Cary's obſervation.

THE gloom of melancholy and deſpair no longer ſat on his brow, but an air of ſerious gladneſs, and deep contemplation had taken poſſeſſion of its place, her Lapyſhip ſtudiouſly watched his countenance, and eaſily perceived his mind was uncommonly agitated; ſhe at length took notice of it.

HE replied, he had indeed been led into a train of ſingular reflexions, "I was "thinking, madam," continued he, "how very wiſely our univerſal father "has ſuited his power to the conveniencies of his creatures, and how much "our real happineſs depends on the ſhortneſs of ſight, of which ignorant of our "good, and obſtinately ſelf-willed, we "are ſometimes tempted to complain— "how weak, and how inconſiderate the "complaint!—In the hour of miſery,

" when the mind of man is ready to ſink
" under the weight of accumulated diſ-
" treſs, even then, it is nothing but this
" very darkneſs which ſupports him, he
" feels himſelf encouraged in expectati-
" on of he knows not what; feeds his
" fancy high with hope, and looks for-
" ward to enjoyments which exiſt not
" but in his own imagination, and on the
" other ſide, when the completion of a
" long cheriſhed hope is brought imme-
" diately within his reach, when the gra-
" tification of his utmoſt wiſh ſeems to
" be abſolutely within his power, his
" mind would ſicken with the exceſs of
" pleaſure, was it not moderated, and
" kept in order by the very uncertainty
" which continually ſurrounds him. I
" have inſtanced the truth of theſe reflecti-
" ons moſt painfully. If about two years
" ago I had been ſenſible of the unhap-
" pineſs then prepared for me, and which
" I was beginning to experience, I ſhould
" have thought the burthen inſupporta-
" ble, and muſt have ſunk under the an-
" ticipation of ſuch a ſeries of miſery,

" and

" and was I now ſecure that my preſent
" expectations would meet with no ſud-
" den and unforeſeen diſappointment,
" was I convinced that my new-born hopes
" would be permitted to ripen into ma-
" turity, and that no rude ſhock would
" again entirely annihilate my riſing
" joys; Oh, Lady Cary! did not the
" imperfection of human happineſs, even
" in its beſt ſtate, teach me to ſuſpect
" the moſt flattering appearances, my
" reaſon would be at this moment inſuffi-
" cient to ſuſtain the tumult of ideal
" pleaſure; but experience has taught
" me to be cautious, and I am now more
" than ever inclined to doubt the ſtability
" of my good fortune; my life has
" hitherto been ſo variouſly chequered
" with good and evil, that one has ba-
" lanced the other, and when diſap-
" pointment had deſtroyed a favourite
" wiſh, a new hope immediately ſprung
" up from its ruins; but of late, the
" equilibrium has been loſt, and the ſcale
" of adverſity has preponderated, it now
" begins to riſe again, I hope to ſink

" no more. Theſe ideas, madam, muſt " appear very ſingular to you, but at " preſent I dare not explain myſelf, I " dare not entruſt even you with my ex- " pectations, leſt in return, you ſhould " ſhare my diſappointment."

THE beginning of this addreſs had engaged the whole of Lady Cary's attention, and ſhe had liſtened with eager impatience to learn in what it was to end, but his concluſion was infinitely more extraordinary than his introduction:—— Piqued by the abruptneſs with which he had diſappointed her expectation, ſhe replied in the ſame ſtile, " How incon- " ſiſtent is the character of man, who " could have ſuppoſed that reflections ſo " judicious and refined were calculated " to illuſtrate juſt nothing; human hap- " pineſs is indeed imperfect, and when " will it be otherwiſe if diſcontent be " the only ſenſation cheriſhed in the hu- " man breaſt; of what, my dear Edward, " have you to complain? Has not fortune " been liberal in her donations? Do you

" not,

" not, generally ſpeaking, poſſeſs every
" real good? But like a froward child,
" led by whim and caprice, you ſpurn
" them from you, ſpurn the coach, the
" wind-mill, and the rattle, becauſe the
" hobby-horſe is with-held; do, then,
" ſeek conſolation by recounting the
" hiſtory of your misfortunes to the world,
" tell them you poſſeſs youth, and health,
" tell them your friends love and eſteem
" you, tell them you are rich and affluent,
" ent, and cloſe the melancholy tale,
" by telling them you are miſerable;
" believe me every heart muſt infallibly
" melt at the affecting recital, and every
" eye muſt drop a tear to the woeful nar-
" ration."

The evident diſtreſs of Lewiſham moderated the warmth of her Ladyſhip's expreſſions, and ſhe felt ſhe had treated him too ſeverely, by perceiving the tear gliſten in his eye.

" Good Heaven!" ſaid he, " Lady
" Cary, how have I deſerved your cen-

" ſure? How have I incurred the diſ-
" pleaſure of my beſt friend? Your ge-
" nerous boſom has ever hitherto ſym-
" pathized in my feelings, nor have you
" ever before termed my unhappineſs
" unreaſonable; why is it then that I
" now meet with the moſt cruel reproaches,
" where I have been uſed to meet with
" the kindeſt relief? Few in the
" world, Madam, are qualified to ad-
" miniſter conſolation to a wounded
" mind; the man whoſe only want is
" money, conceives every one who
" poſſeſſes it, has nothing left to wiſh,
" and the invalid impriſoned by diſeaſe,
" or tortured by pain, muſt look upon
" the man ſound, and in health, as na-
" ture's moſt favoured ſon; to either of
" thoſe I am conſcious I muſt appear an
" object greatly to be envied, becauſe
" their eſtimation of happineſs is compa-
" rative; but the breaſt gentle and
" compaſſionate, whoſe ſenſibility has
" ſmarted in a ſimilar ſituation, the ex-
" alted ſoul, noble and capacious, can
" participate mental diſtreſs: to either

" of

" of thoſe, Madam, ſhould I enumerate,
" ſhould I even double every circum-
" ſtance of what you term my good for-
" tune, and then deſcribe my ſouls dear-
" eſt treaſure withheld from my moſt
" ardent wiſhes, and my tendereſt ex-
" pectations alternately raiſed and diſap-
" pointed; believe me, Lady Cary, they
" would feel for me, they would for a mo-
" ment forget the unhappy inmate of
" their own breaſt to ſooth the diſtreſs of
" mine."

LADY CARY, whoſe momentary reſent-ment had been merely occaſioned by his having ſeriouſly excited her curioſity and then refuſed to gratify it, now moſt ſincerely pitied the agitation ſhe had cauſed by her unjuſtifiable picque, and made uſe of the gentleſt language to reſtore peace and tranquillity to his too irritable ſoul.

LEWISHAM's heart was naturally generous and good, and the only imperfection of his diſpoſition was a ſlight

ſhade of impatience, while his own ſituation was confined and dependant; he had conſidered Miſs Weſtbury as above his hopes, and ſenſible as he was how partially ſhe eſteemed him, he had never entertained a thought of taking advantage of her tenderneſs for the unwarrantable promotion of his intereſt.

Lady Cary had firſt taught his wiſhes to aſpire, ſhe had authoriſed his affection by her approbation, and had diſtinguiſhed him by the moſt liberal proofs of her friendſhip; but he was ſtill conſcious of Harriet's ſuperiority, and while her father's negative appeared reaſonable, he had no idea of murmuring, but now when fortune had taken his part ſo decidedly, when he was ſo thoroughly entitled to expect the completion of his felicity, to be diſappointed by a ridiculous punctilio, was infinitely too much for the feeble efforts of his philoſophy to ſupport with patience, and he conceived he had an indiſputable right to complain of the caprice of his fate, which

which while it loaded him with pecuniary favour, cauſeleſsly withheld the only object who could have rendered thoſe favours welcome.

CHAP. XXVIII.

WHEN Lady Cary had tranquillized his mind by allowing the juſtneſs of his diſſatisfaction; ſhe requeſted he would inform her, if not what the hopes really were to which he alluded, at leaſt, what might have given riſe to them. Mr. Lewiſham replied, he was rather apprehenſive ſhe would again accuſe him of caprice, when he confeſſed they had been occaſioned by the appearance of Mrs. Weſtbury, that he had juſt ſeen her in Kenſington Gardens, and he felt an irreſiſtible deſire of converſing with her, for that if he was not deceived, ſtrangely deceived indeed, it was in his

his power to offer her terms of ſeparation, which ſhe would not venture to refuſe; he therefore requeſted Sir William Burt would aſſiſt him in his deſign, by appointing Mrs. Weſtbury and the Captain, with their proper council, to meet the council of Mr. Weſtbury the next day, for the purpoſe of agreeing on a final ſettlement. Sir William would lend them his houſe, Lord Bloomer's preſence muſt be ſolicited, and he ſhould entreat the whole family to be preſent at a meeting which, if his hopes were not too ſanguine, would terminate greatly to their ſatisfaction.

Lady Cary had expected nothing leſs than ſuch a propoſal; ſhe replied, Mr. Lewiſham muſt be convinced, no perſon could be more deſirous of being freed from this infamous connexion than herſelf, but ſtill ſhe could not acquieſce in his requeſt, becauſe ſhe had given over all hopes of this kind. Sir William likewiſe oppoſed, from a conviction that the attempt, however laudable it might be,

be, would only tend to encreaſe their adverſaries triumph and their own humiliation; Lord Bloomer, he doubted not, would readily appear, but his appearance would be uſeleſs, they were already fully detected, they knew it, they gloried in their ſucceſsful infamy, and laughed at the idea of being expoſed.

Mr. Lewisham was not obſtinate in general, but at preſent he appeared very much like it, he allowed there was a great deal of truth in all they had advanced, but ſtill he requeſted they would oblige him; he reaſoned and entreated ſo very earneſtly that they were at laſt induced to comply. Sir William wrote to Mrs. Weſtbury and the Captain, very civilly requeſting they would meet Mr. Weſtbury at his houſe the next day, at two o'clock, attended by perſons proper to adjuſt the terms betwixt them, which ſhould be ſettled to her entire ſatisfaction. Mrs. Weſtbury returned an anſwer in the moſt ironical ſtile; that they certainly would do themſelves the pleaſure of

of meeting them agreeable to the appointment.

In the morning Mr. Lewiſham found his friends were deſirous of declining the interview; Lady Cary confeſſed ſhe knew not how to act; Harriet begged to be excuſed, and Mr. Weſtbury declared he could not ſupport a ſcene, from the event of which he had ſo little to hope, and ſo much to fear. Lewiſham argued and prayed, he aſſured them they muſt all appear, they were all concerned, their preſence was indiſpenſible, and the ſettlement could not be adjuſted without them; theſe were powerful incentives, they at length prevailed, and he conducted them to Sir William's, where they were met by Lord Bloomer, whoſe appearance did not leſſen the aukwardneſs of Mr. Weſtbury's ſituation.

As the appointed hour approached the palpitation of every heart increaſed, Lewiſham alone appeared collected, he requeſted they would keep up their ſpirits,

rits, and remember, they were the injured, and not the guilty party, he explained to Sir William the part he was to act, and as ſoon as the expected carriage drove up to the door, he retired into an adjoining room.

MRS. WESTBURY, accompanied by the Captain, tripped up the ſtairs with a flutter of affected gaiety, and entered the drawing-room with a face as undaunted and ſerene as if her buſineſs had been of the moſt laudable and praiſeworthy kind; on her firſt perceiving Lord Bloomer, ſhe turned to the Captain with an emphatic,—'ſo!'—and the monoſyllable expreſſed whole volumes. Sir William officiated as maſter of the ceremonies, and with a view of intimidating her as much as poſſible, introduced her with the utmoſt formality to both his lordſhip and Mr. Weſtbury, but he did not ſucceed in his deſign, for without betraying the leaſt confuſion, ſhe ſeated herſelf with wonderful compoſure.

THE

THE captain was not ſo much at his eaſe, his ſituation and appearance was truly ridiculous, he ſtood in the preſence of his late maſter, his late brother, and his late bride elect; when he ſaw only Mr. Weſtbury he felt all the conſequence of his ſuppoſitious equality, but when his eyes met the inauſpicious glance of Lord Bloomer and Sir William Burt, he ſhrunk back into all the nothingneſs of menial ſervility.

SIR WILLIAM was beginning to addreſs himſelf to Mrs. Weſtbury, but ſhe interrupted him, "give me leave," ſaid ſhe, "to anticipate all the clever things "you are going to ſay, ſenſible and per- "tinent no doubt, but at preſent very "little to the purpoſe; I plainly per- "ceive why I am brought here, but I "am eaſily prepared on the occaſion; "in the firſt place, you will accuſe me "with having lived with Lord Bloomer, "guilty, I acknowledge the fact; ſe- "condly, you will inform me this gen- "tleman is not my brother, granted; "he

" he is not, he is my friend then, it is
" equally convenient to me; many more
" charges of the kind are to be exhibited
" againſt me no doubt, to all which I
" ſhall plead guilty. You invited me
" here to detect and expoſe me, but
" when you have done ſo, what advan-
" tage will you derive from it? I ſhall
" ſtill be Mr. Weſtbury's wife in ſpite
" of you; he can have nothing to prove
" againſt me, which can poſſibly affect
" that part of my claim; therefore, the
" conſequence of your chimerical
" ſchemes will be all deſpiſed by me,
" and inſtead of attempting to conciliate
" your favour, by receding from any
" part of my demands, I will increaſe
" them, and the two thouſand *per ann.*
" before demanded, ſhall now be made
" three, or I will ſtill be Mrs. Weſtbury.—
" All you can accuſe me of, was prior
" to my marriage; you will allow,
" I ſuppoſe, Mr. Weſtbury was arrived at
" years of diſcretion, and if he choſe to
" commit a ridiculous action, there is
" no reaſon in nature, which can poſ-

" ſibly

" ſibly preclude my enjoying the benefit " of it. You are now thoroughly acquaint- " ed with my ſentiments, and you are " acquainted with my terms; I have " gentlemen waiting to ſee them pro- " perly ſettled, if they meet with your " approbation."

THE ſteady effrontery of her behaviour was abſolutely aſtoniſhing, no one was capable of replying, not having any thing to offer in oppoſition to arguments ſo concluſive. Mr. Lewiſham's conduct ſurpriſed and vexed them exceedingly, he had ſo earneſtly deſired this interview, ſeemingly for no other purpoſe than that of expoſing them.

MRS. WESTBURY not receiving an anſwer ſo readily as ſhe expected, again addreſſed herſelf to Sir William: " the " very active part," ſaid ſhe, " which " you have been good enough to take " through the whole of this buſineſs " induces me to conſider you as the prin- " cipal of the preſent aſſembly; to you, " therefore,

" therefore, I appeal; what is your in-
" tention? for, I doubt not, but Mr.
" Weſtbury and his new friends are to
" be governed by our advice; you ſee
" the event of your ſtratagem; you ſee
" the ſucceſs of your politics; I have
" already told you, and I tell you again,
" I ſhall give up no part of what I al-
" ready poſſeſs, nor will I reſign my
" title as the wife of Mr. Weſtbury, on
" any other condition than thoſe I have
" propoſed." She then roſe majeſtically from her ſeat, and looking round her with an air of contemptuous inſolence, was about to retire, when Mr. Lewiſham entered at the door exactly facing her: ſhe ſtarted at the unexpected apparition, but a ray of hope that her recollection was imperfect, ſuſtained her for a moment, till Lewiſham bowed to her very low; the inſtantaneous tranſition of her countenance was wonderful, and an involuntary ſcream betrayed the downfall of her vile exultation; ſhe turned to the captain with a look of horror, and claſping her hands in an agony, exclaimed,

ed, "fool! you have been the ruin of "us both."

The captain directed his eyes towards the ſeeming cauſe of Mrs. Weſtbury's alarm, and inſtantly diſcovered him to be the interruptor of his late deſign on Harriet, he could not conceive why that conſideration ſhould affect Mrs. Weſtbury, ſuppoſing her as incapable of remorſe or ſhame as himſelf, when her perſonal, or pecuniary ſafety was not concerned; but on his taking a more attentive ſurvey of the object before him, he felt his blood thicken in his veins, when he recogniſed him as the man who had been witneſs to an event, infinitely more conſequential than the one before alluded to; Mrs. Weſtbury's terror no longer ſurpriſed him, he now ſhared it moſt ſenſibly, and moſt ſeverely felt the bitterneſs of her reflection.

LEWISHAM viewed the late triumphant ſchemers with his eyes flaſhing indignation, while his fine face glowed with

with the conſcious dignity which he at that moment felt, in being appointed the inſtrument of Heaven for the puniſhment of vice, and the reward of virtue.

"INFAMOUS woman!" ſaid he, "how "is it poſſible, that you can ſupport the "preſence of that gentleman, after hav- "ing with ſuch horrible malignity "trampled on the happineſs of his fa- "mily and fortune; and you wretch! "mean, wicked, execrable wretch! how "can you, laden as you are with accu- "mulated crimes, how can you lift up "your eyes in the face of the man on "whoſe ruin you had founded your "hopes, and with whoſe ſpoils you fanci- "ed yourſelf enriched? Think you there "exiſts another being ſo truly deteſtable "as to be the wilful promoter of his "own infamy; ſo thoroughly loſt to "every ſenſe of ſhame, as to proſtitute "the perſon of his wife for the baſeſt "purpoſes of avaricious villainy? This "gentleman, Sir," ſaid Lewiſham to Mr. Weſtbury, "is the huſband of that "lady;

" lady ; I had the honour of joining their
" hands, and I believe that will be ſuf-
" ficient to ſet aſide all her claims on
" you."

The face of affairs was now wonderfully changed indeed; the captain ſeemed greatly inclined to retire, but unluckily for him, the ſituation of Lewiſham impeded his progreſs to the door, and cut off the poſſibility of a retreat; the lady who but a few minutes before had expreſſed the dictates of her will and pleaſure in the moſt imperious, and inſolent ſtyle, now ſat ſullenly ſilent, burſting with vexation and diſappointment, while the eyes of every other perſon was directed to Lewiſham, enquiring the explanation of a ſeries of myſterious incidents which had ſucceeded each other in ſuch rapid progreſſion, and every one of which appeared more ambiguous than the laſt; but conceiving our readers may be equally at a loſs on the ſame occaſion, we think it abſolutely incumbent on us to give them ſatisfaction firſt; for which

which purpoſe we muſt recall their attention to the ſituation of our family at Bath, the day after Mr. Weſtbury had made his firſt declaration of love, when the captain pretended a ſudden engagement called himſelf and ſiſter to meet a friend at ——. In the evening before, when the captain retired to bed, after the departure of Mr. Weſtbury, he was led to indulge his imagination by anticipating the happineſs of his future ſituation, but all at once he recollected the precarious nature of his dependence, and the great probability there was that his ſiſter would diſclaim their conſanguinity when it could be of no further uſe to herſelf: to exact an obligation for a very handſome ſum, for which Mr. Weſtbury by marrying her would become liable, was his firſt deſign, but he inſtantly perceived the impoſſibility of ſecuring her faith by that means, becauſe Mr. Weſtbury was to marry her by her pretended, and not her real name, and of courſe, if that circumſtance came to be explained, by his producing a written teſtimonial,

nial, it would at once invalidate the marriage, on which his future hopes were founded; it certainly was a very delicate point to decide on; her word was nothing, her bond was nothing, for if ſhe affixed the ſignature of Baily, Mr. Weſtbury would moſt certainly diſclaim the obligation as he had never heard of any ſuch perſon, and if ſhe ſigned by the name of Claverly, it would be no real obligation on her, as no ſuch perſon exiſted, and of courſe he might juſt as well confide in her promiſe at once. The expedient which he at laſt fixed on, was to marry her himſelf, for by that means ſhe would remain entirely in his power, and after Mr. Weſtbury's death, all that ſhe ſhould have acquired would be his property; by this precaution he was likewiſe ſecure of her preſent attention, becauſe her own intereſt would be ſo materially concerned, the ſecret would be of equal importance to them both, and if ſhe ſuffered him to experience any inconvenience by her neglect, he would always

always have it in his power to revenge himſelf.

THE only difficulty which preſented itſelf to his imagination, was the getting the affair privately and expeditiouſly diſpatched, as delays were extremely dangerous in a ſituation ſo precarious as theirs; it was impoſſible to attempt a thing of the kind at Bath, and a month's reſidence in any other place was a neceſſary ſtipulation, which they dared not comply with.

BUT the captain did not deſpair, he was well acquainted with the efficacy of gold; he knew by experience it had triumphed over equity, and did not doubt, but that if properly applied, it would do the ſame by law; he fixed on ——— for the ſcene of action, becauſe within the dioceſe of a ſurrogate, of whom he had heard juſt ſuch a character as he at that period wiſhed to meet with; he accordingly waited on the diſciple of avarice, and demanded a private audience,

and by a judicious management of his favourite argument he obtained the mandate, which he well knew few clergymen would venture to diſpute.

When the licence was filling up he was aſked, to what place he would have it directed; the captain's good fortune was at that moment moſt unpardonably remiſs, and his evil genius laid the foundation for his future ruin, by ſuggeſting Burton, he had no particular reaſon for naming Burton, but that he conſidered it as an obſcure village, removed from all human converſe, and of courſe there was the leſs probability of his being detected in the execution of his iniquitous project.

Now it happened by an unaccountable mixture of accidental concurrences, that the clergyman of Burton was the friend of Mr. Lewiſham, whoſe invitation he had accepted that he might be near Miſs Weſtbury, and where he had arrived about the ſame time with the captain and his

his intended bride. Theſe were the matrimonial adventurers at whoſe nuptials Lewiſham's humanity, much againſt his inclination, obliged him to officiate as the ſubſtitute of his friend*. This was the couple, the ſingularity of whoſe appearance led him to take more notice of them than he otherwiſe would have done, to which trifling diſtinction they now ſtood indebted for the diſappointment and confuſion they were ſo compleatly involved in.

When Mr. Lewiſham firſt met the captain with Harriet, he was conſcious of having ſeen him before, but he did not recollect where or when, nor had their names ever ſtruck his ear; but when Mrs. Weſtbury was pointed out to him by Sir William Burt in Kenſington Gardens, his memory did him more juſtice, and he recognized her inſtantly, and the identity of her perſon was confirmed by ſuch a train of incidents which opened themſelves to his "mind's eye," as his

* See Vol. I. p. 112.

ideas traced them to their ſource, that he entertained not the leaſt doubt of the truth; he returned to Lady Cary's, painfully impreſſed with the various emotions, which a heart tender, grateful, and good as his own could only feel; his breaſt glowed one moment with generous indignation, and the next with the moſt exquiſite delight, when he felt himſelf capable of extricating, in a manner ſo little expected, the perſons he moſt revered, eſteemed, and loved, from the embarraſſment and unhappineſs which had already made ſuch great devaſtation on their health and ſpirits.

He was exceedingly at a loſs how to introduce the ſubject in the moſt pleaſing, and at the ſame time in the ſafeſt manner; he was deſirous of procuring a general interview, yet he wiſhed to avoid communicating the reaſon why he deſired it, till it ſhould be in his power to convince one party by the conviction of the other.

He

He did not wiſh to withhold their ſatisfaction a moment longer than was neceſſary, but the circumſtance was of ſuch immenſe importance, that though the evidence of his ſenſes fully confirmed to him the impoſſibility of their eluding detection, yet till the event was reduced to further certainty, he dared not raiſe their hopes for fear of increaſing their diſappointment; his ſucceſs was ſuperior to his expectation in bringing about the meeting. When they approached he retired, that he might have an opportunity of obſerving them more fully, himſelf unobſerved. He ſuffered Mrs. Weſtbury to proceed uninterrupted, till ſhe had gained the higheſt ſummit of malicious aſſurance, and had fully diſcovered the vicious propenſity of her heart, by the envenomed taunts with which ſhe ſo wantonly irritated the ſmarting ſenſibility of her much injured huſband.

If I was in want of a chapter to fill up the intended dimenſions of my volumes, I have now the faireſt opportunity in the

world for introducing the morſel of convenience. I could moſt elaborately deſcribe the wonderful workings of nature through a long ſeries of ſurprize and admiration, which took poſſeſſion of the breaſts of Mr. Lewiſham's auditors, when he had explained the meaning of his addreſs to the captain and the captain's lady; but, I have ever conſidered it by far the wiſeſt method to leave all exceſſes, whether of joy, grief, or aſtoniſhment, to the more fertile and flowery imagination of my readers; I could give many reaſons for this part of my conduct, but two ſhall ſuffice: the firſt, and permit me to add, the moſt material, is the little confidence I have of my own abilities, as I look on a deſcription of the paſſions as the moſt difficult part of this kind of writing. The ſecond reaſon, is the very various lights in which the ſame circumſtance appears to different diſpoſitions; if my picture ſhould glow with all the warm, luxuriant animation of wit, vivacity and eloquence, then would the ſober, ſerious, ſententious fair one, obliquely

obliquely caſt aſide the hapleſs volume, and pronounce the whole production romantic and ridiculous; and again, if I write with all the dull mediocrity, and phlegmatic ſtupidity of a muſty metaphyſician, then would the more ſpirited belle lay down the ill fated book, proteſting, nothing was ever ſuch an intolerable *twaddle*.

EVERY reflection of this kind I eſcape by my ſcheme of forbearance; the imagination of the reader is to furniſh the neceſſary ſupplies, and they are to ſuppoſe, if I had wrote on the ſubject at all, it certainly would have been in the ſtile moſt pleaſing to themſelves; pathos, for the pathetic, wit for the witty, ſentiment for the ſentimental, and for the moralizers, ſhreds of philoſophy, and proverbial patches; I therefore need only obſerve, their faith in his veracity induced them to credit a tale of ſo wondrous a nature. Lady Cary embraced him, thanked him as the guardian and preſerver of her family. Mr. Weſtbury's gratitude, or

rather the expreſſions of his gratitude, were more moderate, he felt the full force of his obligation to Mr. Lewiſham, he felt a load taken from his ſpirits, which he had been unable to ſuſtain, but his mortifications had corrected his impetuoſity, and taught him caution, he claſped his hands with fervor and devotion on his breaſt, and bowing with an humble ſenſe of providential beneficence, "gracious Heaven; ſaid he, how little "have I deſerved your favour?—Mr. "Lewiſham, continued he, in what words "ſhall I thank you for having extricated "me from the difficulties in which I had "involved myſelf?" Harriet's eyes were fixed on the carpet, while her delighted heart glowed with ſenſations moſt exquiſite.—Sir William Burt indulged the joy and vivacity of his diſpoſition, he had not forgot the lady's behaviour on a former occaſion, and he amply repaid her in her own coin for animadverſions on his embaſſy.

We preſume no ſeverer puniſhment could have been inflicted on Mr. and *Mrs. Claverly*, than the ſcene of which they were now ſpectators, the triumph of virtue muſt be ſufficiently mortifying to a vicious mind, if it is only intereſted for the general cauſe, but with what anguiſh muſt their ſouls have been torn by the inſiduous vulture of envy and deſpair, when they ſaw the trophies waving over their defeat, and decked with ſpoils, they had deemed their own. Mr. Lewiſham was incapable of ungenerous or unmanly exultation, the unhappineſs which the captain and his lady had been the cauſe of, filled him with indignation againſt them, but his reſentment ceaſed with their power of doing miſchief; perceiving their preſence was a reſtraint on his friends, he opened them a paſſage by moving from the door; but wiſhing to impreſs them with a proper ſenſe of the enormity and danger of their behaviour, he again addreſſed them: "to "upbraid you with the wanton devaſta-"tion which you have ſought to make in

" this family, is now unneceſſary, heaven
" has defeated your intentions, and left
" you the victims of your own machina-
" tions, you now experience the inſtabi-
" lity of every dependence which has not
" virtue for its baſis, you were ſuffered
" to ſucceed through a long ſeries of ini-
" quitous practices, till you had gained
" the ſummit of your ambitious views,
" where in the preſumptuous pride of
" your heart you vainly perſuaded your-
" ſelf diſappointment could no way
" reach you, how deceitful were your
" hopes? how juſtly fruſtrated your ex-
" pectation."

" How very different are the thoughts,
" with which you enter'd; and with
" which you are about to leave this houſe?
" you came exulting in ſucceſsful villany,
" to ſecure a large reward for premeditat-
" ed baſeneſs, perfidy, and ingratitude;
" how you go, the preſent feelings of your
" own breaſt renders it unneceſſary for me
" to ſay. The buſineſs which brought you

" here

" here being finally ſettled, you are at li-
" berty to retire whenever you pleaſe."

THE captain did not wait for a reiterated permiſſion, but regardleſs of the lady, left the room with the utmoſt precipitation; Mrs. Claverly's ſpirit was not eaſily ſubdued, but looking round her with a countenance in which mingled rage, grief, and ſhame, were ſtruggling with affected compoſure and diſdain, ſhe left the apartment in which the wages of her guilt had been paid her in a coin ſhe ſo little expected, and ſo much deſerved.

SOON after the departure of the diſappointed pair, Lord Bloomer, having congratulated Mr. Weſtbury on the fortunate untying of the gordian knot, and complimented the reſt of the family on the ſame occaſion, likewiſe retired.

MR. LEWISHAM'S friends now felt themſelves perfectly at their eaſe, and were again acknowledging their obligations to him, but he begged they would de-

decline the ſubject, aſſuring them it was impoſſible for him to arrogate the leaſt merit to himſelf through the whole proceeding. Divine providence had been content to manifeſt its wiſdom and power by means of its own, which no human invention could poſſibly have equalled, and therefore their gratitude could be only due to the ſupreme being, who had been thus providing for their happineſs in the moment they ſuppoſed themſelves moſt miſerable.

MR. WESTBURY acknowledged the truth of Mr. Lewiſham's obſervations; he ſaid unhappineſs had indeed been the lot of them all; as to his own part he had been juſtly puniſhed for the obſtinacy of his temper, and the arrogant temerity with which he had confided in himſelf; but he could not help regretting the anxiety in which his imprudence had involved his friends; that anxiety was now at an end, and to him, he was obliged that it was ſo; yet ſenſible as he was of this obligation, and great as the obligation really was,

was, he had no inclination to diſcharge it; ſo far from it, he was deſirous of increaſing the debt; he conceived he had given already ſufficient proof of the inefficiency of his capacity for the prudent direction of his own conduct; he hoped his experience had taught him wiſdom, but there was a probability of his being miſtaken, and ſome event of conſequence in future, might be marked with his folly, as ſignally as the laſt; his fortune, the diſpoſal of which he had but juſt recovered, was ample, and he wiſh'd to ſecure himſelf from making an ill uſe of it again, by diveſting himſelf of the power; the major part of it, with a treaſure of much dearer nature, he wiſhed to reſign into ſome more prudent hand; but the difficulty would be in finding a perſon with whom he might ſafety intruſt ſuch a valuable depoſit; he knew of but one, and taking the hand of his daughter, he preſented it to Mr. Lewiſham, ſaying, will you, my worthy amiable friend, will you oblige me by accepting the charge.

MR.

Mr. Weſtbury's addreſs diffuſed a glow of pleaſing ſurprize over every face, which was ſoon matured into a more confirmed expreſſion of their various emotions. Lewiſham's feelings were too powerful for words, he took the half reluctant hand, and preſſing it to his lips, he bowed over it in ſilence, while his heart beat quick, powerfully impreſs'd with the trueſt ſenſe of gratitude and joy.

Lady Cary embraced her niece with unaffected tranſport, and ſhe embraced Mr. Lewiſham with equal pleaſure, "I "never doubted, ſaid ſhe, my valuable "friend, but that a mind, generous and "good as yours, would at laſt meet "with favour and approbation of "Heaven: nor did I ever doubt, my "dear girl, but that your amiable, gentle "heart, would at laſt meet with the re-"ward it merited."

Sir William Burt was not deficient in the expreſſions of his friendſhip, he thanked

thanked Mr. Weſtbury as ſincerely as if his generoſity had concerned himſelf; he looked at Miſs Weſtbury with an archneſs which made her tremble, but pitying her confuſion, he reſtrained his vivacity, that he might not increaſe it.

Mr. Lewisham diſpatched a meſſenger to inform his uncle of his ſituation, and his lordſhip immediately join'd the happy party, whoſe ſatisfaction he did not participate with a parſimonious ſpirit, and they paſſed the evening with very different ſenſations from what the morning had promiſed.

We fear we ſhould be thought as tedious and prolix, as a certain ſublime and beautiful harranguer, if we were to enter into a minute detail of ſettlements, and affairs of that kind, the whole of which was adjuſted by Mr. Weſtbury and Lord Cary, for ſo very indifferent was Lewiſham about fortune, and Harriet about pin money, that the one never enquired what he was to receive,

ceive, or the other what proviſion was made for her, 'tis ſufficient for me to ſay, no objections were made on one ſide, or any difficulties ſtarted on the other; the terms were complied with as ſoon as they were propoſed, for Mr. Weſtbury conceived he could not do enough for a man, to whom he was ſo much indebted. Lady Cary reſigned the two thouſand per ann. to Mr. Lewiſham which was to have been his at her death, Lord Cary generouſly preſented him with the ſame ſum, and Mr. Weſtbury gave his daughter fifty thouſand pounds. A houſe was taken in Portland-place for the reſidence of the amiable pair, and in conſideration of the firmneſs and conſtancy with which they had ſupported ſuch a ſeries of difficulties and diſappointments, the celebration of their nuptials was forwarded as much as poſſible.

The following morning at breakfaſt, Lady Cary introduced the Captain's name and addreſſed herſelf to Mr. Weſtbury; ſhe ſpoke the ſentiments of pure humanity

humanity and benevolence. She acknowledged nothing could be offered in defence of behaviour ſo truly criminal, nor were they by any means entitled to expect the leaſt conſideration from him, yet when ſhe reflected but for a moment on their preſent miſerable ſituation, ſunk at once from affluence to poverty, from ſplendour to infamy, what might not be the conſequence in the preſent inſtance; it was impoſſible to ſeparate one from the other, therefore the idea that the woman for whom he had really felt an affection, and whom he had ſome time conſidered as his wife, ſhould have neceſſity to plead as an excuſe for the repetition of ſuch practices, or ſhould be forced to ſeek a wretched ſubſiſtence by more common and equally infamous methods, would be dreadful to a degree; his fortune was large; the means of ſupport might be allowed her, a bare proviſion for food and raiment; and then if the love of vice prevailed, on her own head muſt be the conſequence; but perhaps that might

might not be the caſe, the recent downfall of her high raiſed hopes might have a good effect on her mind, and the leſſon ſhe had received, aided by his generoſity, might produce the moſt ſalutary reflections; at any rate the chance of doing her ſo eſſential a ſervice without the leaſt prejudice to himſelf, was in her opinion a motive ſufficient for attempting it; baſe from inclination, ſhe had been no doubt, but ſhe wiſhed to ſave her from being abandoned by neceſſity.

Mr. Westbury readily agreed with her ladyſhip's ſentiments; his deteſtation had abated when their power of injuring him ceaſed, and greatly as they had deſerved his reſentment, he had no idea of exerting it againſt a fallen enemy; a hundred a year was offered them on condition of their reſiding entirely in the country, which was thankleſsly accepted. That affair being ſatisfactorily ſettled and every preliminary adjuſted, the expected morning at length aroſe, as clear and unclouded as the breaſts of

thoſe it was to light to the ſupremeſt ſtate of earthly happineſs.

THE bluſhing maid, mild and innocent as the infant ray, ſhooting through ethereal ſpace from the Eaſtern world, arrayed in garments of the pureſt white, the ſpotleſs emblems of her own ſtill purer ſoul, accompanied by her aunt, deſcended to the drawing-room, where the divine, her father, Lord Cary, Sir William, and Mr. Lewiſham waited her approach; Lord Cary met her, and by his conſiderate attention, brought her into conſequence with herſelf, while the ſacred ceremony was performing, and Lewiſham received her from his uncle, as a jewel ineſtimable, heaven's choiceſt gift, and the ſource of all ſublunary bliſs.

HE ſeized the hand which had made them one for ever, and preſſed it with extacy to his lips, while his aching eyes eagerly wandered over her timid down-caſt countenance, ſeeking to find in hers the kindred, though leſs exquiſite, and leſs impatient

ſenſations

ſenſations of his own enraptured ſoul. Inſenſible of the wildneſs of his tranſport, and encouraged by the ſanction of heaven, he ſtrained her to his throbbing breaſt, and ſealed his title by impreſſing a glowing kiſs on her roſy lips.

THE ſcene which ſucceeded was too tumultuous for deſcription; compliments, bleſſings, thanks, and congratulations were amply beſtowed on the amiable pair, in whom truth and honour, conſtancy and virtue, were ſo happily and mutually blended for the reward of a tender paſſion, founded in innocence, and ſupported by reaſon.

THUS having accompanied them thro' a variety of ſcenes, and ſettled them at laſt to their hearts content, at peace with themſelves, pleaſed with their friends, and in univerſal harmony with all mankind, we ſhould leave them to a long ſeries of uninterrupted felicity, which they knew how to enjoy, becauſe they knew how to deſerve.

We

We preſume the moral of this little production cannot be more forcibly pointed out, than by adverting to the ſituations of Mr. and Mrs. Lewiſham, and Mr. and Mrs. Claverly, virtue triumphant in the one, univerſally loved, eſteemed, admired, and reverenced; in the other, vice ſunk beneath contempt, buried in obſcurity, unpitied, unregarded, tormented by mental reflections and harraſſed by mutual reproaches and revilings—But ſuch was the fate of a Coalition.

FINIS.

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70